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MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS.

Monastic Institutions;

THEIR ORIGIN, PROGRESS, NATURE AND TENDENCY.

BY SAMUEL PHILLIPS DAY,

Formerly of the Order of the Presentation.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN AND LONGMANS.

1855.

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1855

TO

THOMAS CHAMBERS, ESQ. M.P.

ETC.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE

INSCRIBED.

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ERRATA.

Page 58, *note*, for Ivo of *Charles*, read, Ivo of *Chartres*.
" 83, line 22, for *their* code, " *its* code.
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PREFACE.

THE leaſt ſaid the ſooneſt mended," is an apophthegm, the applicability of whichis not at all out of place in the preſent inſtance. Prefaces, generally ſpeaking, ſo far from being ornamental are rather detrimental to a book; ſometimes, like doctors' phyſic, they are "neceſſary evils;" but in nine caſes out of ten they had much better be diſpenſed with altogether; for even ſhould the book itſelf happen to be *lucid*, like men

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with diamonds writing on glaſs, they obſcure light with ſcratches. However, following the example of moraliſts, we depart (in our caſe unwillingly) from the very excellent principle which we recommend to others; and venture to ſay a few words to the reader.

As brevity is not only "the ſoul of wit," but in this particular caſe, a matter of duty, I ſhall abide by that rule, and not needleſsly occupy the time and attention of thoſe who may better and more profitably diſpoſe of both one and the other.

My principal object in writing this book has been to meet what I conceive to be a deſideratum, by furniſhing a faithful, impartial, and *unſectarian*, however imperfect, view of the monaſtic ſyſtem of ancient and modern times.

Works of this deſcription too often are either not fit to be placed in the hands of female readers, or elſe are highly exaggerated and prejudiced, and conſequently mar the purpoſe they were deſigned to ſerve. I have carefully endeavoured, "to the end of the chapter," to abſtain from the leaſt appearance of acrimony or invective which the diſcuſſion of ſuch an exciting topic was calculated to provoke; and have avoided as much as poſſible the theological, or rather *polemical* examination of the ſubject; ſimply and fairly treating it as a rational and philoſophical queſtion, to my mind the moſt intereſting and inſtructive light in which it could poſſibly be regarded—always bearing in mind that "to ſuppreſs the truth may now and then be our duty to others; whilſt not

to utter a falſehood muſt always be our duty to ourſelves."*

Having attempted to give a condenſed view of Monaſtic Inſtitutions, I truſt that the brevity I have found needful to adopt does not neceſſarily involve obſcurity; for I ſhould very much regret were the proverb in the remoteſt degree applicable to me, "*Brevis eſſe laboro, obſcurus fio.*" The ſize of the book precluded a more enlarged view of the intereſting ſubject which has occupied my pen, and I was unwilling to ſwell the volume to a larger extent, however valuable the *matériel* at my diſpoſal. My chief object has been to direct public attention to facts, not ſo much as to multiply caſes, illuſ-

* Gueſſes at Truth.

trative of the monaſtic ſyſtem. The end will be attained if the few pages of this unaſſuming book ſhould induce the reader to regard the ſame in its proper light, and to examine more thoughtfully, attentively, and minutely, its entire ramifications and the effects which it is calculated to produce in the world no leſs than in the cloiſter. There are, no doubt, defects of compoſition, for which I muſt throw myſelf on the indulgence of the reader.

As to the numerous authorities brought forward in ſupport of the poſitions I have laid down, I can truly ſay, that they have not been quoted, without a ſtrict attention to the very words of the ſeveral authors to whom reference is made. I would further add, that in an attempt to draw a picture of

the abuſes which have, age after age, crept into the monaſtic ſyſtem, until it became an unſightly maſs of deformity, I have cautiouſly avoided ſetting down aught in malice, or magnifying errors and abominations, in themſelves ſufficiently groſs without any additional colouring.

I now ſtand at the bar of public opinion; and while I anticipate the candid and impartial judgment of thoſe whoſe opinion is worthy of reſpect, I am at the ſame time prepared to encounter ſevere and cauſtic criticiſm at the hands of ſome who have not the judgment or juſtice to diſcriminate, nor the humanity nor charity to diſtinguiſh, between the rabidneſs of ſectarianiſm on the one hand, and the moderation of an unprejudiced Author on the other, when

Monaſtic Inſtitutions form the theme upon which he diſcourſes.—"*Il y a bien quelque choſe là dedans que je ne comprends pas.*"

London:
May, 1855.

Monaſtic Inſtitutions.

CHAPTER I.

The Origin and Progreſs of Monaſticiſm.

"Rude ideas, barbarous ſociety, Egyptian ſuperſtition, and the Roman Catholic Religion, ſolve all the errors of monachiſm."—T. D. Fosbrooke.

WHEN we trace Monachiſm to its ſource, we diſcover that it originated with the early converts to chriſtianity who, powerfully inſtigated by fanaticiſm, as well as influenced by the dread of perſecution, abandoned their ordinary avocations, and betook themſelves for ſafety and retirement to the mountains, the ſolitary deſerts, and even the gloomy caverns of the earth.

During the ſevere and protracted perſecutions which followed the edicts of the em-

peror Diocletian, doubtleſs many individuals, of both ſexes, embraced with avidity the aſcetic life, in order to eſcape from the dire calamities which threatened to overwhelm them. Hence, the barren wilderneſs afforded a refuge, where the darts of the enemy could not penetrate, and a haven, where the ſtorms of adverſity could not reach.

Egypt, within whoſe prolific womb ſuperſtition had been conceived, and upon whoſe breaſts it was nouriſhed and matured, affords the firſt example of ſtrict monaſtic life, in the celebrated hermit, Anthony, who was born at Coba, on the borders of Arcadia, A. D. 251. This extraordinary enthuſiaſt deſerted the ſpot of his nativity, and at firſt ſought a habitation within the ruins of a tower. Subſequently he dwelt among the tombs, where he is ſaid to have performed rigorous penances and mortifications. Having, however, travelled into the deſert a few days' journey eaſtward of the Nile, and diſcovering in that locality a ſpot poſſeſſing a wildneſs of ſcenery peculiarly adapted to his romantic taſtes, and convenient to a ſpring of water—a conſideration of no ſlight import—he fixed his final habitation upon Mount Colzim, adjacent to the Red Sea, A. D. 305, where he

collected an aſſociated community,* and where it is ſaid, by the Jeſuit Sicard,† an ancient monaſtery ſtill retains his name.

One of Anthony's ſayings was, that "He who abideth in ſolitude is delivered from the threefold warfare of hearing, ſpeaking and ſeeing, and has only to ſupport the combat againſt his own heart." His actual experience nevertheleſs entirely negatives this aſſertion; for ſo difficult, nay, impoſſible did he find it to ſuſtain ſuch a combat, that in an hour of trial and diſtreſs he cried to the Lord, aſking how he ſhould be ſaved? "Preſently," ſays the legend, "he ſaw one in the likeneſs of himſelf, who ſat at work, and anon roſe from his work and prayed, and then ſat down again to twiſt a rope of the fibres of the palm, and after a while, roſe and prayed again. It was the angel of the Lord. 'Do this,' ſaid the angel, 'and thou ſhalt be ſaved.'"

Although it has been affirmed and believed by the ancients, as well as the moderns, that Anthony was groſſly ignorant, yet the hiſtorian Tillemont conſiders this ſtatement to be unfounded, and deſcribes him as being ac-

* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 281. (Soames.)

† Miſſions in the Levant.

quainted with reading and writing in the Coptic, his native tongue, and only ignorant as reſpects his knowledge of the Greek. Even the philoſopher Syniſius eulogiſes the natural genius of Anthony, and aſſerts "that he did not require the aid of learning."

Upon this bleak and iſolated mountain Anthony did not exiſt unknown, although apparently debarred from all human intercourſe and intereſts. Nor was he without followers and admirers. Numberleſs individuals, whom natural curioſity alone had drawn to the ſpot, were ultimately induced to make trial of his novel mode of life; and having once embraced it, they ſoon experienced a diſreliſh for ſociety, and remained in ſolitude until they had loſt all appetite or aptitude for ſocial life. Thus monachiſm, like many other great inſtitutions, may clearly be traced to accidental circumſtances. On the Mount of Colzim the firſt ſeeds of monachiſm were ſown; they quickly germinated; and their rapid and ſurpriſing growth muſt aſtoniſh every rational and intelligent mind. The rocks of Thebais, the ſands of Libya, the cities of the Nile, and the mountains and deſert of Nitria, were, in an incredibly ſhort time, thickly peopled by ſeveral thouſand

anchorites; and travellers have obſerved the ruins of fifty monaſteries which were eſtabliſhed in theſe places by Anthony and his diſciples. The Jeſuit Sicard viſited this deſert, and diſcovered there four monaſtic eſtabliſhments, and about twenty or thirty monks. Anthony's diſciples finally diſperſed themſelves over the Ethiopian empire.

There is a curious circumſtance related of one Ammon, who perſuaded his wife to renounce with him a ſecular life. They accordingly retired to the mountain of Nitria, and for a time inhabited together one common aſcetic apartment. This not being pleaſing, however, to the chaſte bride, ſhe manifeſted ſome uneaſineſs thereat, and one day addreſſed her huſband thus:—"It is unſuitable for you, who profeſs chaſtity, to look upon a woman in ſo confined a dwelling; let us, therefore, if it is agreeable to you, perform our exerciſe apart." The concurrence of Ammon was obtained, and each party paſſed the remainder of their lives in ſolitude and abſtinence; partaking neither of wine or oil, eating dry bread alone, and occaſionally refraining from food for ſeveral days together. At one time Ammon required to croſs a river, but being ſo ſqueam-

iſhly modeſt as not to undreſs, he beſought the Lord to enable him to get over without being neceſſitated to break his reſolution. Immediately, it is ſaid, an angel tranſported him to the oppoſite ſide!*

The iſland of Tabenne, in the Nile, ſituated between the modern town of Girge and the ruins of ancient Thebes, was inhabited by Pachomius, and about fourteen hundred of his diſciples. This devotee, in order that he might ſleep little, and with the leaſt poſſible comfort or convenience, never once ſuffered himſelf to lie down, or to recline againſt anything which might afford his body ſupport, but ſat upon a ſtone in the centre of his cell. And among the rules which, according to monkiſh biographers, were given to him by an angel, and became the firſt code of monaſtic laws, was one whereby the members of that order were enjoined to ſleep in a ſitting and not in a recumbent poſition. This renowned abbot founded nine monaſteries for men, and, cruel to relate, one for women! Frequently on feſtival days would be congregated together as many as fifty thouſand individuals who adopted his ſingularly auſtere and rigid rule of diſcipline.

* Socrates' Eccles. Hiſt. lib. 4, c. xxiii.

Impelled both by the example of Anthony and his own innate love for ſolitude, Hilarion, a Syrian youth, eſtabliſhed monachiſm in Paleſtine, A. D. 328, and took up his abode upon a ſandy beach, a few miles diſtant from Gaza. Soon did the fame of this man become commenſurate with, if it did not poſitively ſurpaſs, that of Anthony: for, when on his occaſional viſitation of the ſeveral monaſteries in Paleſtine, he was invariably accompanied by a vaſt proceſſion, compriſing no leſs than two or three thouſand anchorites. This founder proſecuted a courſe of ſevere diſcipline during a period of forty-eight years.

In Rome, monachiſm was firſt introduced and propagated by Athanaſius, A. D. 341, and a few Egyptian monks, whoſe revolting and horrifying aſpect created, for a time, contempt and ridicule. Strange to ſay, however, theſe feelings ultimately ſubſided, and gave place to emulation and eſteem.

The celebrated and ambitious Baſil eſtabliſhed a monaſtery in Pontus, A. D. 366, in a dreary ſolitude, where he governed for a time his followers, who were diſperſed along the coaſt of the Black Sea.

Martin of Tours, who united in himſelf rather the conflicting offices of a warrior and

chriſtian biſhop, founded ſeveral monaſtic ſocieties in Gaul, A.D. 370. His diſciples numbered ſeveral thouſands; many of whom choſe for their place of exile the bleak and rugged iſlands which lie ſtudded over the Tuſcan Sea.

The monks belonging to the famous monaſtery of Bangor, founded by one *Congal*, A.D. 530, who were three thouſand in number, diſperſed themſelves over Ireland, Gaul, Germany, Switzerland, and the whole northern regions.* Thus we behold a ſyſtem hateful in the ſight of God, in rude contradiction to the principles of Nature, revolting to the ſocial feelings and inimical to the happineſs of mankind, ſpreading itſelf over the earth, and in its flight carrying ruin and deſolation in its unſightly train.

* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 21. (Soames.)

CHAPTER II.

Cauſes of the rapid Increaſe of Monaſticiſm—Mode of Living, Vows, and Wealth of the early Monks.

"Fanaticiſm will ever have ſucceſs. It treats upon a ſubject where there is a general feeling and intereſt; and acts by operating upon Paſſion, which is always contagious and intelligible; becauſe the ſenſations of all mankind are ſimilar, though their underſtandings may differ."—*Preface to Britiſh Monachiſm.*

THE cauſes which have operated in producing the rapid ſpread of monachiſm, may clearly be traced to a threefold ſource: namely, fanaticiſm, example, and ſiniſter ends. Almoſt all religious ſects have begun among the illiterate and common people. From this claſs chiefly have been drawn their earlieſt as well as moſt numerous proſelytes. "The auſtere ſyſtem of morality," ſays Adam Smith, "has been adopted by

theſe ſects almoſt conſtantly, or with very few exceptions, for there have been ſome. It was the ſyſtem by which they could beſt recommend themſelves to that order of people, to whom they firſt propoſed their plan of reformation, upon what had been before eſtabliſhed. Many, perhaps the greater part of them, have even endeavoured to gain credit, by refining upon this auſtere ſyſtem, and by carrying it to ſome degree of folly and extravagance; and this exceſſive rigour has frequently recommended them, more than anything elſe, to the reſpect and veneration of the common people."* Whenever reaſon remains uncultivated, a paſſion for the marvellous obtains amongſt a people; and fanaticiſm readily aſſumes any, even the moſt groteſque ſhape. The hiſtory of religions but too truly and painfully teſtifies this. Now, in the earlier middle age, when chriſtianity itſelf was very conſiderably extended by means of the ſword and by the reception of baptiſm exempting priſoners of war from ſlavery or death;† in ſuch an age, ſurely, pure reaſon would have been quite unavailing.

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* Wealth of Nations, iii. p. 202.

† Solorzanus de Indiarum Jure, lib. ii. ch. xvi. p. 263.

A noble mind is not even proof againſt the ſpirit of fanaticiſm, when once it ſucceeds in inſinuating itſelf into it. The vital principles of virtue and truth become inevitably corroded thereby. Nor are we to be greatly ſurpriſed at the fanaticiſm of the paſt, when we know that even pious frauds continued to the days of Fox, the hiſtorian, who publiſhed in his "Book of Martyrs," the barbarous murder of individuals who were known to have lived long after.

The manner in which example operated upon the uncultivated minds of the multitude may readily be conceived, when we conſider the ſurpriſing popularity which the firſt founders and promulgators of this new ſyſtem had attained. The ſpread of their apparently extraordinary miracles, and ſucceſsful combatings with evil ſpirits, muſt have had a powerful tendency to induce perſons, in the ſlighteſt degree credulous, to embrace a ſtate, to all human appearance, ſo ſpecially and ſignally ſtamped with the ſeal of Heaven. Further, each proſelyte was taught that pleaſure was deſtruction; that mortification was the ſole means of acquiring the Divine favour, and avoiding temporal misfortunes;* and

* Anglia Sacr. i. 797.

that a world voluntarily renounced, was the ſpiritual ladder by means of which they were to aſcend to the gates of Zion. The eloquent Chryſoſtom, biſhop of Conſtantinople, who had himſelf exchanged the monaſtic habit for the epiſcopal crown, encouraged the monks to believe that they were the "elect;" and that the monaſtic cell was a type of the ark, "out of which ſalvation was impoſſible." He even dedicated no leſs than three books in eulogy of the monaſtic life; but ultimately he received a poor reward for his ill-beſtowed panegyrics. Thoſe very individuals, upon whom he laviſhed ſuch undue praiſes, became his moſt bitter and adverſe enemies, and were the ſpecial inſtruments in procuring his perpetual baniſhment to Cucuſus, a city of Cilicia, where he died about three years afterwards.* Thus was Chryſoſtom rewarded for his adulatory epiſtles, by the black-garbled monks of Cappadocia.

Siniſter ends and perſonal motives likewiſe were not without their effects in peopling the inhabitable deſerts and barren wilds with multitudes of people; for hither, as to a common aſylum, men broken in mind, in fortune,

* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 470. (Soames.)

and in fame, betook themſelves; the friendleſs, the diſappointed, the criminal who fled from public juſtice, and the innocent who ſought ſhelter from oppreſſion.* Vanity, the ſpirit of emulation, accidental misfortune, and even ambition, acted as ſtrong incentives to the monaſtic ſtate. Indeed, inſtances are recorded of the emaciated and auſtere monk being ſuddenly endowed with the higheſt civil authority, as well as elevated to the epiſcopal chair; and it is notorious that the monaſteries of the eaſt, of Egypt, and of Gaul, ſupplied numerous candidates for theſe dignified offices.† Nothing can well afford ſuch a ſtriking and remarkable proof of the exceſſive and fanatical veneration that was paid to the monaſtic order, as the treatment they received from ſeveral kings and emperors, who drew numbers of monks and abbots from their cloiſters, and placed them in ſtations entirely foreign to their vows and their character; even amidſt the ſplendour of a court, and at the head of affairs. The

* Platina has termed the monaſtic life, "Unicum calamitoſorum refugium."

† Sulpitius Severus, De Vita Martini, cap. x. p. 320, Dial. i. cap. xxi. p. 426.

tranſition, indeed, was violent, from the obſcurity of a convent, and the ſtudy of a liturgy, to ſit at the helm of an empire and manage the political intereſts of nations.* Hence, it may ſafely be affirmed, that ſiniſter views and intereſted motives gave a ſweetneſs to mortification, an agreeableneſs to ſolitude, and an intrepidity to the mind, diveſted of which influences, many of thoſe unhappy beings would, in all probability, have yielded to deſpair, and put a termination to an exiſtence at beſt but a living death. Several fled to monaſtic retreats whoſe circumſtances became embarraſſed by oppreſſion; and a vaſt number of individuals, whom the horrors of war had intimidated, found a moſt deſirable refuge in theſe aſylums. They were content to endure privations painful to fleſh and blood, which the fear of periſhing by ruthleſs barbarians could alone have alleviated or rendered ſupportable.

The cells or dwellings of the monks were originally low and narrow,—unlike the fine ſpacious apartments of our modern recluſe,—and built of ſlight materials: while the more devoted of their occupants, in order to in-

* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 201. (Soames.)

creaſe their ſufferings, would not afford themſelves ſpace ſufficient to ſtand erect, or to extend their bodies, thinking it a meritorious duty to paſs their days and nights in a ſitting poſture.

The Egyptian monks generally carried their abſtemiouſneſs to a very great extent. Anthony, Pachomius, and their diſciples, would take no more than twelve ounces of bread, or biſcuit, for their daily ſuſtenance, which limited quantity was divided into two meals. Mecarius, of Alexandria, partook of no food during Lent but herbs, and then only once a week. This ſaintly fanatic having one day killed a gnat which had bitten him, was ſo ſtruck with compunction at the ſight of the inſect's blood that, by way of atonement, he retired into the marſhes, where, for ſix months, he voluntarily expoſed himſelf to all winged and creeping inſects, until every part of his fleſh became literally ſwollen and ulcerated from their bites! Sozomen relates of him, that he had ſo hardened his body by auſterities, that the very beard could not penetrate through his ſkin. This perſonage, when in the full odour of filth and rags, returned one day to his convent, humbled and mortified by the ſenſe of his own inferiority,

exclaiming, "I am not yet a monk, but I have ſeen monks"—for he had poſitively fallen in with two of theſe wretches *ſtark naked!** In Pontus, as Gregory of Nazianzus teſtifies, ſome devotees faſted twenty days and nights together. Paul, the firſt hermit, is ſaid to have lived upon the fruit of a palm-tree, and a piece of bread ſupplied to him daily by a raven; which quantity this conſiderate creature doubled on one occaſion when Anthony viſited him. The cauſe of Anthony's viſit to Paul is rather remarkable: fancying himſelf to be the moſt rigid and retired of all monks, Anthony became exceedingly humbled upon being told in a dream that there exiſted a better even than he, who reſided farther in the wilderneſs. Accordingly, Anthony ſets out on a voyage of diſcovery and goes in ſearch of Paul's habitation, which was contiguous to ſome ruins that had been, as the legend ſtates, the mint of Egypt during the time of Antony and Cleopatra. Meeting no other perſons on the way than a ſatyr and a centaur, he arrived at the cave and ſaw an hyena go in. Paul

* Peregrinatorium Religioſum, by T. D. Foſbrooke, A.M., F.A.S.

hearing a human footſtep cloſed the portal; but Anthony entreated that the holy man, who had allowed a beaſt to enter, would not exclude a brother. Overcome by ſome half-dozen hours' perſeverance on the part of his viſitor, the hermit removed the ſtone and aſked Anthony, why it was that he had taken ſo much trouble to ſee a poor decayed old man, who would ſpeedily return to duſt? The next queſtion was a natural one—how the affairs of the world were going on? *Narra mihi quæſo, quomodo ſe habeat hominum genus? An in antiquis urbibus nova tecta conſurgant? quo mundus regatur imperio? an ſuperſint aliqui qui dæmonum errore rapiantur?* However, Anthony is ſent back to fetch a cloak which Athanaſius had given him, and in which his new friend deſires to be buried. On his return to the cave, he is appriſed of Paul's death by ſeeing his ſoul aſcend to glory: he finds the deceaſed hermit on his knees, his body erect, his hands, head, and eyes upraiſed in the attitude of prayer, and two lions attending as grave-diggers. Anthony buried him in the cave; from whence his remains were tranſlated, firſt to Conſtantinople, ſecondly to Venice, and finally to Buda, where La Brocquiere ſaw it in a ſtate of

perfect preſervation four hundred years ago !*

The uſe of vegetables, cheeſe, fruit, or fiſh, was rarely indulged in by the oriental monks ; but on particular occaſions, their abbots mitigated the extreme auſterity of the rules, by allowing them the uſe of the ſmall fiſh of the Nile ; a luxury which was had at the banquet to which Caſſian was invited by Serenus, an Egyptian abbot.

Beſides the devotees already alluded to, mention is made of St. Hilary having ſubſiſted upon fifteen figs a-day for a number of years. And more modern accounts affirm that St. Genovefa, of Paris, lived thirty-five years upon a ſmall quantity of barley-bread daily—that St. Catherine, of Cardonna, in Spain, a nun of the Carmelite order, exiſted ſolely upon graſs ! while others, even in our own country, are ſaid to have ſuſtained life by partaking daily of the " wafer"—a pretty demonſtrable proof of the " real preſence" of ſomething more ſubſtantial than the mere ſcholaſtic *accidents* of bread remaining after the " *Hoc eſt corpus meum*" of the prieſtly functionary.†

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* Pereg. Relig. &c. &c.

† Luther relates that when at Rome he found prieſts in

Among the Weſtern monks, the rules of Columbanus were the moſt ſevere, being nearly as rigorous as thoſe of their brethren in the Eaſt. In Seville, the monaſtic conſtitutions of Iſidore were very lenient, and permitted the uſe of fleſh-meat occaſionally. So great, however, did the relaxation in monaſtic diſcipline become, that the famous founder of the Benedictines was finally compelled to allow a Roman meaſure of wine, called *hemina* (equal to half-a-pint), daily to the monks;*

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the conſecration of the wafer, while telling the people that they were creating God, uſing the words, "*Tu es panis, et panis manebis.*" "Thou art bread, and bread thou ſhalt remain!"—*D'Aubigné's Hiſt. Reform.*

In the preface to Archbiſhop Wake's Diſcourſe of the Holy Euchariſt, it is related that Archbiſhop Uſher, who had converted by his agency ſome Romiſh prieſts, once inquired of them, What they who ſaid maſs daily, and were not obliged to confeſs venial ſins, could have to trouble confeſſors with? They ingenuouſly acknowledged that the chief part of their conſtant confeſſion was *their own infidelity* as to the tenet of Tranſubſtantiation: for which they mutually quitted and abſolved one another.

* "Every one," ſaith St. Benedict, "hath his proper gift from God, one thus, and another thus, and therefore we appoint the meaſure of other men's food not without ſome ſcrupuloſity. Yet, conſidering the imbecility of the infirm, we think a *hemina* of wine daily will ſuffice for each. And if either labour, heat of ſummer, or the ſituation of the place, require more, let the prior do what he thinketh good, hav-

and thoſe of his diſciples who croſſed the Alps, the Rhine, and the Baltic, required a ſtill ſtronger beverage, and in more ample quantity. It is true that Pachomius ultimately extended the dietary of the monks; but, as a *quid pro quo*, he made them work in proportion.

Monaſtics were very tenacious of keeping inviolable their vows of evangelical poverty and obedience. The former appeared moſt prominently in their exterior; for their habit or tunic, which was worn as an outſide covering, conſiſted of the coarſeſt and cheapeſt material; and except in the Eaſt, where the article was far from expenſive, they never indulged in the luxury of linen. Not unfrequently even did the ſkins of beaſts conſtitute their only attire. By their vow of obedience they impoſed upon themſelves the ſhackles of perpetual vaſſalage and the vileſt ſervitude. Accordingly, they yielded readily and blindly to the moſt capricious dictates of

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ing ever a care that *ſuperfluity* or *drunkenneſs* creep not in. And although we read wine to be in no ſort the drink of monks, yet, *becauſe in theſe times they will not be ſo perſuaded*, let us at leaſt conſent to this; that we drink not to ſatiety, but ſparingly."—*Trans. of the Rules of St. Benedict, by C. F., Prieſt of the Order*, edit. Douay, 1638.

thoſe whom they were bound to obey, no matter how impracticable or prepoſterous.

As an illuſtration of the punctiliouſneſs with which the vow of poverty was regarded, I ſhall relate a ſtory which St. Gregory mentions as having occurred in his own monaſtery:—A monk of the name of Juſtus had amaſſed a large ſum of money, amounting to *three crowns*, for his own uſe. Ultimately his ſin was diſcovered. However, by the ſingular induſtry of Gregory, he was brought to repent of his cupidity on his death-bed. As an example to others, the ſaint ordered the poor monk's body and his money to be buried together in a dunghill, and forbade prayers to be read for his ſoul. At length Gregory repented of his harſh treatment to his poor deceaſed brother! and calling Pretorius, the prior of the convent, deſired him to ſay maſſes for Juſtus for thirty days in ſucceſſion. When this time had tranſpired, the dead man appeared to brother Copioſus, and told him, that he had indeed been in a very bad ſtate, but he was then quite well, as he had that day received the communion!

Nor were theſe wretched beings exempted from more rigid diſcipline and additional penances. The moſt trivial fault, or imperfec-

tion, was puniſhed with extreme rigour and ſeverity; rendering the offender ſubject to long faſtings, and watchings, ſolitary confinement, and perhaps flagellation. In the Weſt, the rules of Columbanus, which are ſaid to have ſurpaſſed all others in ſimplicity and brevity, inflicted no leſs than one hundred laſhes for faults of a character ſo trivial, that they could not be mentioned without exciting the riſibility of the reader!* But there were cruelties more abhorrent and diabolical than theſe practiſed by abbots; ſuch as mutilating their monks, and putting out their eyes; and an inſtance is recorded of an abbeſs cutting the noſe off each nun in her convent with a razor!† However barbarous theſe acts may appear, the inhuman *vade in pace*, or ſubterranean dungeon, more recently invented, far exceeded all other inſtruments of torture.

Sometimes, however, ſelf-mutilation was adopted, as in the caſe of Ammonius, who travelled to Rome with Athanaſius, and who, when about to be elevated to the epiſcopate, voluntarily cut off his right ear, in order that

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* Jac. Uſſerii Sylloge. Antiquar. Epiſtolar. Hibernicar. Holſtenii Codex Regularum, tom. ii.

† *Vide* Alban Butler's Lives of the Saints.

he might thereby diſqualify himſelf for ordination. Evagrius, whom Theophilus, biſhop of Alexandria, wiſhed to force the prelacy upon, having effected his eſcape without in any way maiming himſelf, afterwards chanced to meet Ammonius and jocoſely obſerved, that he had done wrong in cutting off his ear, and conſequently had rendered himſelf criminal in the ſight of God: to whom Ammonius replied:—"But do you think, Evagrius, that you will eſcape unpuniſhed, who, from ſelf-love, have cut out your own tongue, to avoid the exerciſe of that gift of utterance which has been committed to you?"*

Not only was flagellation frequently reſorted to by the members of monaſtic corporations, but a new order was originated in Italy, A.D. 1263, and called by the name of "Flagellant," adopting this corporeal diſcipline as a primary part of its code; which order finally ſpread over Europe. So turbulent and revolting, however, did it become, that emperors and pontiffs who once revered it for its ſanctity, had to iſſue decrees for its ſuppreſſion.† But this barbarous and brutal

* Socrates' Eccles. Hiſt. lib. iv. chap. 24.

† Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 598. (Soames.)

practice was not ſtrictly confined to cloiſtered walls, nor ſolely adminiſtered to ſuch as had, by virtue of their vows, buried themſelves within them. The laity ſometimes were ſuffered to indulge their taſte for this peculiar kind of eccleſiaſtical diſcipline. At other times they were the very unwilling victims of the Church's ſeverity. Even flogging by proxy was not altogether a thing unknown at no very diſtant period, when crowned heads had to ſubmit to ſuch a groſs indignity.*

The practice of flagellation by proxy ſeems to have originated in conjugal affection. A woman who had gone to make her confeſſion was followed to the church by her huſband who, fortunately for the wife, entertained doubts as to her fidelity. He ſecreted himſelf for a time; when, happening to obſerve his ſpouſe led by the confeſſor behind the altar in order to be flagellated, he at once made his appearance; objected that ſhe was too tender to bear the puniſhment, and offered to receive it in her ſtead. This propoſal the wife greatly applauded;

* The Engliſh Tranſlator of the Abbé Boileu's "Hiſtory of the Flagellants," quotes from Cardinal D'Oſſat's letters an account of the flogging by proxy of Henry IV. of France, when he was abſolved from hereſy.

and the man had no ſooner placed himſelf on his knees, than ſhe exclaimed: "Now, my father, lay on ſtoutly, for I am a great ſinner!"*

Manual labour was at firſt obligatory upon all who embraced a monaſtic profeſſion, and was regarded both in the light of a penance, and as a neceſſary duty. The garden and fields, therefore, were cultivated with diligent care. In Egypt, the monks principally occupied themſelves by making ſandals of wood, and baſkets and mats of the palm-tree leaves; the intrinſic value of which being greatly enhanced by the ſanctimonious character of the workmen, they were ſold at a pretty profitable rate in Alexandria, to which city boats deſcended from the ſeveral monaſteries of Tabenne and Thebais.

At length, manual labour became partly or altogether diſpenſed with, in proportion as the wealth of the monaſteries increaſed. The infatuated novice was obliged to deliver up all his earthly poſſeſſions into the hands of the abbot, ere he could be conſidered as having perfectly renounced the world he had left. Others contributed plate, money, and

* M. Scott. Menſa Philoſophica, iv. 18.

valuable articles, to a large amount, with the view of obtaining the prayers, or a participation in the penances, of thoſe who, in their eſtimation, were eminently ſanctified ſervants of God.* All ſuch as reſpected the common rules of decency, or preſerved in their external demeanour the leaſt appearance of piety and virtue, were looked upon as ſaints of the higheſt rank, and conſidered as the peculiar favourites of heaven. This circumſtance was, no doubt, favourable to many of the monks, who were leſs profligate than the reſt of their order, and might contribute more or leſs to ſupport the whole body. Beſides, it often happened that princes, dukes, knights, and generals, whoſe days had been conſumed in debauchery and crimes, and diſtinguiſhed by nothing but the violent exploits of unbridled luſt, cruelty, and avarice, felt, at the approach of old age, or death, the inexpreſſible anguiſh of a wounded conſcience, and the gloomy apprehenſions and terrors it excites. In this dreadful condition what was their reſource? What were the means by

* "Whoever will enrich monks ſhall cauſe his progeny to proſper both in this world and the next."—*Dunſt. Concord. Regul. Proem. Spicil. Eadm.* 156.

which they hoped to diſarm the uplifted hand of Divine juſtice, and render the Governor of the world propitious? They purchaſed, at an enormous price, the prayers of the monks, to ſcreen them from judgment, and devoted to God and to the ſaints, a large portion of the fruits of their rapine, or entered themſelves into the monaſtic order, and bequeathed their poſſeſſions to their new brethren. And thus it was that monkery received perpetually new acceſſions of opulence and credit.*

From theſe and numerous other cauſes, wealth increaſed in all monaſteries of any notoriety, more eſpecially in thoſe of the Eaſt, and among the famous order of Benedictines. And with its increaſe degeneracy grew proportionate.† Hence, we find that thoſe who forſook the world with apparent contempt, were, in reality, its moſt attached and fondeſt votaries; being "lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God." We can form ſome idea of the extent of monkiſh perverſeneſs from the facts, that Pius VII. iſſued a bull, reſtricting monks from appearing in play-

* Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 354-5. (Soames.)

† Simon, Biblioth. Critique, tom. iii. cap. xxxii.

houſes with the habits of their order! and that Charlemagne had in vain attempted, by repeated and ſevere edicts, to put a ſtop to the growing evils which reſulted from their licentiouſneſs and enormities.*

Reſpecting St. Benedict, founder of the order which bears his name, it may be obſerved that his life has been written by no leſs a perſonage than Pope Gregory the Great, from the information, as he affirms, of four diſciples of the ſaint. It is one of the worſt that ever was written; for though the lives of the ſaints in general are as richly larded with lies, there is not, perhaps, a ſingle one, with any foundation in truth, from which ſo little information can be obtained. He was born in the province of Nurſia, about the year 480, and was ſent to Rome, to ſtudy the liberal ſciences; but fearing leſt he ſhould loſe his ſoul in the vain purſuit of knowledge, "*receſſit ſcienter neſciens, et ſapienter indoctus*," ſays St. Gregory, he left his family, as well as his ſtudies, became a monk, and was choſen abbot; but being too ſtrict for thoſe who were under him, they attempted to poiſon him. After eſcaping the danger, he

* Capitularia Caroli. publiſhed by Baluzius, tom. i. p. 148.

retired for a while into ſolitude, till, "increaſing wonderfully in virtue and miracles," the noble Romans began to bring their children to him for inſtruction, and he acquired ſufficient influence to eſtabliſh twelve monaſteries, with twelve monks in each. Here alſo he provoked either envy by his reputation, or hatred by his auſterity; a prieſt in the neighbourhood is accuſed of endeavouring firſt to poiſon him, and afterwards to pervert his diſciples, and Benedict thought it prudent once more to withdraw. He took with him a few of his monks, and was accompanied by two angels, and three tame cows; a circumſtance unaccountably omitted by his papal biographer, but related upon the equally valid teſtimony of Pietro Damiano, a cardinal and a ſaint. With this remarkable retinue he arrived at Mount Caſſino, formerly, it is ſaid, the reſidence of the Roman author Varro. There he deſtroyed a temple of Apollo, converted the pagans in the neighbourhood, founded a convent, wrote the rule of his order,* and died in the year 543.

It may be obſerved, that many learned

* For an account of which, ſee note by the Tranſlator, in Moſheim, vol. ii. p. 22, *paſſim*. (Soames.)

and illuſtrious individuals have, from time to time, buried themſelves in monaſtic ſecluſion. But, aſſuredly, this circumſtance does not at all argue in favour of ſimilar retreats; although every one muſt admit that monaſteries were, during the dark ages, the magazines of literature, and the repoſitories of ſcience.* And I am induced to think, with the Abbé Premord, that "an Alexander, a Cæſar, a Homer, a Virgil, a Cicero, a Plato, a Demoſthenes, and a Tacitus, would have remained entirely unknown to us, had it not been for the labours of monks and recluſes;" to whoſe indefatigable pens each lover of ſcience and literature muſt confeſs that he owes a large debt of gratitude.† Yet, however highly we may be inclined to value the learning and perſevering efforts of theſe men, we cannot but cenſure the ſyſtem with which they were intimately connected; as well as bear in mind, that—

> "Talents, angel-bright,
> If wanting worth, are ſhining inſtruments
> In falſe ambition's hand—to finiſh faults
> Illuſtrious, and give infamy renown!"

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* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 13. (Soames.)

† *Vide* Mabillon, Acta. S. i. Ord. Benedicti, tom. ii. p. 480.

CHAPTER III.

The "Conſuetudinal" of Cœnobites and Anchorites.

"The Eremetical life is contrary to the nature of man when it was uncorrupt, for whom it was not judged good to be alone. As the ſolitary life is an enemy to mankind, (Gen. ii.) ſo it is to the communion of ſaints in the Church of God. (Matt. v. 15.) The example of the primitive Church is againſt it (Acts ii. 44); and the uncleaneſt and moſt hateful birds covet deſolate places."—CARTER on *Matt.* iii. 1.

MONKS were originally diſtinguiſhed by the names of Cœnobites and Anchorites. The former ſo called from the circumſtance of their living together under regular rules and diſcipline; the latter from their extraordinary fanaticiſm in regulating their own individual obſervances, and holding little or no intercourſe with each other. Theſe early ſeparatiſts deprecated and contemned the ſpirit of the monaſtery as much

as they did that of the world; and leſt they ſhould be contaminated thereby, or induced to become as remiſs and unmortified as others, fled from its baneful atmoſphere into the inacceſſible cave and uninhabitable deſert, frequented only by animals of prey, whom they even affected to imitate by going upon their hands and knees! Some aſpirants took up their dwellings in the tombs, like the demoniacs, or abode in dens with wild beaſts, or elſe made dens for themſelves, and burrowed into the ground. Here, indeed, they had ample opportunity for gratifying their ſavage propenſities; and, accordingly, they embraced ſuch a mode of life with delight and ſatisfaction. But, as might be expected, they finally ſunk under the ſtupendous weight of ſuffering, occaſioned, in part, by heavy chains, collars, bracelets, gauntlets, and greaves, of maſſive and rigid iron. Even ſome of thoſe ſaints (forgive me for abuſing the name) diſdained the raiment neceſſary for covering, and wandered about naked, expoſed to the ſun, the wind, and the ſand ſhowers which ſwept through the deſert. A remarkable inſtance of this peculiar fanaticiſm is exemplified in the life of St. Mary of Egypt—a perſon far-famed in monaſtic lore.

Others, again, aſſimilating themſelves more cloſely to the very brute, actually grazed in the fields of Meſopotamia; from which circumſtance they were denominated *Boſkoi*. And here it will not be ill-timed to mention a ſtrange example of religious fatuity in the perſon of Simeon Stylites, the famous pillar-ſaint.*

This extraordinary fanatic, a native of Siſan, in Syria, was engaged in the occupation of a ſhepherd previous to his entering upon a monaſtic life. Not conſidering, however, the profeſſion of a monk ſufficiently auſtere, he formed a ſcheme, as novel as it was impious, by which he imagined the Divine juſtice would be appeaſed, and ample ſatisfaction rendered for his tranſgreſſions! Accordingly he quitted the cell, and betook himſelf to a dreary ſpot in the deſert; where, with a view of eſcaping the contagion of the world, and being lifted up above its cares, toils, and purſuits, he paſſed thirty-ſeven years of his miſerable life upon five pillars, of the reſpective heights of ſix, twelve, twenty-two, thirty-ſix, and forty cubits.† Upon

* Sancti Columnares, or in Greek, Stylites.

† *Vide* Acts of Simeon the Stylite, in Steph. Euodii Aſſemanni Actis Martyrum Orient. et Occident. vol. ii. p. 227. (Romæ 1748.)

this laſt lofty eminence he was bound by irons, ſo that he was conſtrained to remain in an immovable poſition; and after performing rigorous mortifications, truly deſerving of the name, which have helped, in no ſmall degree, to fill the "*merit box*" of the Vatican, he finally expired.

So great was the reputation of this fanatic, and ſo highly was he venerated, that when the emperor Theodoſius had given a command to reinſtate the Jews of Antioch in their ſynagogue, and Simeon rebuked him for his conduct, Theodoſius confeſſed the iniquity of which he was guilty: and, not deeming this act ſufficient to expiate his ſin, he actually depoſed the civil officer who adviſed him in the affair, ouſted the poor perſecuted deſcendants of Abraham, and finally beſought, with earneſtneſs and humiliation, the prayers and interceſſion of the aërial ſaint!

After the deceaſe of Simeon, a church was built round the pillar, upon which he paſſed ſo great a portion of his life, in order to perpetuate the remembrance of ſo devoted a man. And it is related on the authority of Evagrius, who had been a ſpectator of the miracle, that on each anniverſary of the ſaint,

a ſtar was obſerved playing about the lofty monument. Women were not permitted to enter the church on theſe auſpicious occaſions; they might only ſtand at the door, and peep in, to witneſs the ſupernatural manifeſtation of delight with which Heaven viewed a heap of ſtones upon which the feet of ſo auſtere and ſanctified a being once reſted. His body was finally tranſlated to Antioch; and from thence would have been removed, by the emperor Leo, to Conſtantinople, had it not been for the entreaty of the people of the former city, who repreſented that an earthquake had thrown down their fortifications, and that they had brought thither the body of Simeon, in order to ſupply for them the want of a wall. The actions of this madman, or "ſaint," according to the phraſeology of the ſchoolmen, are recorded for edification, though not for *imitation*, by Romiſt hagiographers. "This godly man," writes Evagrius, "while yet in the fleſh, imitated the life of angels, withdrew himſelf from earthly things, forced nature, which ever inclineth downwards, aſpiring to things heavenly, and placing himſelf between earth and heaven, he, together with the angels, praiſed the Lord, lifted up the prayers of

men, and offered them to God, and brought down the mercy of God to make men partakers thereof."

There is mention made of a ſecond Simeon the Stylite, who lived about the ſixth century, and who, it is ſaid, exceeded, in mortification of life, the originator of the aërial ſect. He lived upon his pillar ſixty-eight years, and pretended to work miracles, and to propheſy.* Such are the ſort of men held forth to the chriſtian world as flowers of the ſpiritual garden; whereas, in truth, they are but rank weeds of the Egyptian ſoil.

This extraordinary ſuperſtition of the Syrians and Orientals, the Latins had too much judgment and good ſenſe to imitate; nor was it countenanced by the biſhops of the Latin church: for when Wulfilaicus erected a pillar in Treves, with the view of imitating the renowned Simeon, by living on its ſummit, the neighbouring biſhops would not ſuffer him to put his deſire into effect, and had the pillar crumbled to the ground.†

The lives of monaſtic heroes and heroines occaſionally furniſh us with numerous in-

* Evagrius Eccles. Hiſt. lib. vi. c. xxiii. p. 471.

† Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 467-8. (Soames.)

ſtances of the ſillieſt extravagances, and the moſt pitiable and loathſome exceſſes of aſcetic rigour. We read, for example, of St. Simon Stock, general of the Carmelites, who dwelt in the trunk of an old oak-tree; of St. Pier, who always walked while he was taking his food, "becauſe," to uſe his own words, "he did not conſider eating as a buſineſs for which time was to be ſet apart, but as a thing to be done when it did not interrupt his avocation;" of Beradat, who uſed no clothing, except a cloſe ſack of ſkins, which had no other opening than one for his noſe, and another for his mouth; of the abbeſs Tereſa, who, in order to torment her body, which was naturally weak and delicate, made uſe of hair-ſhirts, nettles, and ſcourges, and even uſed to roll herſelf among thorns; of Eufraxia, who belonged to a convent containing one hundred and thirty nuns, not one of whom ever waſhed her feet—the very mention of ſuch an indulgence as a bath being an abomination to them!

St. Roſe of Lima, canonized by Clement X. A. D. 1673, was the moſt precocious of ſaints. Born of chriſtian parents, in South America, ſhe, from the period of her birth, ſhone with the preſages of future holineſs.

It is ſaid, that the face of the infant being miraculouſly transfigured into the image of a roſe, occaſioned her being called by this name, to which the Virgin Mary added the ſurname, commanding her from thenceforth to be deſignated the Roſe of St. Mary. She vowed perpetual virginity at the early age of five years!* The following affecting account of the auſterities ſhe practiſed is extracted from the bull of her canonization, and affords a pitiable ſpecimen of religious fanaticiſm :—

"She changed the ſtones and croſſes (with which, when going to prayer in her childhood, and as yet ignorant of the uſe of whips, ſhe was loaded by her maid Marianne, who was almoſt the only perſon conſcious of her mortifications) into iron chains, which ſhe prepared as ſcourges, and, after the example of St. Dominic, every night ſhe offered herſelf a bloody victim to God to avert his juſt anger, even to the copious effuſion of ſtreams of blood, either for the ſorrows of the holy church, or for the neceſſities of the endangered kingdom of the city of Lima, or for compenſating the wrongs of ſinners, or

* Brev. Rom. Die xxx. Aug.

for making an expiation for the ſouls of the dead, or for obtaining divine aid for thoſe who were in their laſt agonies; the ſervant being ſometimes horror-ſtruck at the dreadful blows of the chains. And when the uſe of theſe were forbidden to her, ſhe privately encircled her waiſt with one of them, bound thrice round her, ſo that it never was apparent that ſhe wore it, except when ſhe was under the tortures of the ſciatica, which chain was afterwards looſened only by a miracle. Its links after the virgin's death were found to emit a wondrous and indeſcribable ſweet odour. Leſt any part of her innocent body ſhould be free from ſuffering, ſhe tortured her arms and limbs with penal chains, and ſtuffed her breaſts and ſides with handfuls of nettles and ſmall briars. She afterwards increaſed the ſharpneſs of the hair-cloth, that reached from her neck beneath her knees, by needles mixed up with it, which ſhe uſed for many years, until ſhe was ordered to put it off on account of the frequent vomiting of blood. When ſhe laid aſide this puniſhment, ſhe ſubſtituted another garment leſs injurious to her health, but not leſs troubleſome; for beneath it every movement was painful to her. Her feet only were free from theſe ſuf-

ferings, which either by hitting them with ſtones, or by the burning of an oven, ſhe did not ſuffer to be free from torture. * * *

" She fixed upon her head a tin crown, with ſharp little nails in it, and for ſome years never put it on without receiving wounds. When ſhe grew older, this was replaced by one which was armed by ninety-nine points. * * * *

" She deſired the hardneſs of her bed to be ſuch that it ſhould rather drive away than invite ſleep; ſo that when about to ſleep, the ſame ſhould be both a bed to her and an inſtrument of torture. Her pillow was either an unpoliſhed trunk, or ſtones concealed for this purpoſe, which bed ſhe afterwards ſo filled with ſharp pieces of tiles and triangular pieces of broken jugs, that the ſharp points of each ſhould be turned to her body; nor did ſhe try to ſleep until ſhe had embittered her mouth with a draught of gall.

" Near the time of her death, Roſa throughout Lent alternately ſang the canticles and praiſes of God, every day for a whole hour, with a very melodious bird, in ſo orderly a manner, that when the bird ſang, the virgin was ſilent, and when the virgin ſang, the bird, who was moſt attentive, ceaſed to ſing.

She invited, moreover, the inanimate plants, after an unheard-of fashion, to praise and to pray to God, pronouncing the verse, '*Benedicite universa germinantia in terra Domino.*' 'Bless the Lord, all ye things which bud on the earth.' And she so visibly persuaded them, that the tops of the trees touched the earth, as if adoring their Creator with a solemn veneration!"*

The following specimen of worse than Hindoo fanaticism, establishes the fact, that the Romist standard of sanctity in the nineteenth century is just the same as it was during the dark ages, when the greatest knaves and madmen were canonized as saints, and obtained a place in the Calendar. It is the sworn testimony of Father Dominic Corsano, missionary of the Congregation of the most holy Redeemer, and confessor to the venerable servant of God, Alphonso Maria de Liguria, bishop of St. Agatha, declared at his canonization, A.D. 1830:—

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* Codex Constitutionum, quas summi pontifices ediderunt in solemni canonizatione Sanctorum a Johanne xv. ad Benedictum XIII., sive ab an Dom. 993, usque ad A.D. 1729. Accurante Justo Fontanino, Archiepiscopo Ancyrano. Romæ, 1729. Ex. typographia Reverendæ Cameræ Apostolicæ.

" I know for a certainty that this ſervant of God conſtantly ſcourged himſelf unbloodily and bloodily; and beſides the unbloody ſcourgings enjoined by his rule, he was wont to puniſh himſelf every day; in the morning before the uſual hour of riſing, and in the evening after the ſignal for repoſe. On Saturdays he ſcourged himſelf till the blood flowed, and theſe ſcourgings were ſo violent, and cauſed ſo much blood to guſh from his limbs, that not only was his linen always covered with it, but you might even ſee the walls of his ſmall room ſtained, and his books ſprinkled with it. * * * * Alſo from what I have ſeen with my own eyes, and have heard declared by certain fathers who are worthy of credit, I know that this ſervant of God macerated his body with hair-cloth with ſharp points in it, and with chains, as well on the arms as on the legs, which he carried with him till dinner time, and theſe for the moſt part were ſo armed with ſharp points, that they filled with horror all who ever ſaw them. I have heard ſay, alſo, that he had a dreſs filled with a coat of mail with iron points; that he had bandages of camel's hair; and other inſtruments of penance were caſually ſeen by me, and by others of my companions,

notwithſtanding his zealous and circumſpect ſecrecy.

"Of a ſimilar kind was his extreme mortification in ſleeping upon two planks covered with a ſack, with a little ſtraw in it, ſo that it appeared a hard ſtone. I frequently alſo heard ſay, that he ſlept during his few hours with a large ſtone hung on, and tied to his feet. * * * *

"I well remember that he never ſhaved himſelf when he was with us with a razor, but only by little and little he did it with pincers, and he cauſed his aſſiſtant friar to make his clerical crown with the ſame pincers!"*

The Roman Breviary is the repertory of legends as monſtrous and ridiculous as thoſe already brought before the reader's notice. Therein we read, that St. Raymond of Pennafort made a voyage by ſea of one hundred and ſixty miles, from one of the Balearic Iſles to Barcelona, neither in a ſhip, nor in a boat, but upon his own cloak;† that St.

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* Sacra rituum congregatione, emo. et Rmo. Domino Cardinali Carracciolo relatore, beatificationis et canonizationis, ven. Servi Dei Alphonſi Maria de Ligurio, fundatoris congregationis ſemi. Redemptoris, ac olim Epiſcopi S. Agatha. Romæ, 1836. Apud Lazarinum, Rev. Cam. Apos. typographum.

† Breviarum Romanum, Die xxiii. Januarii.

Philip, of Nerium, was ſo wounded with the love of God, he continually languiſhed ; and his heart boiled over with ſuch ardour, that when it could not be contained within its own boundaries, the Lord wonderfully enlarged his breaſt, by breaking and elevating two of his ribs ;* that St. Dionyſius walked, with his head in his hands, from Paris to the ſite of the preſent abbey of St. Denis ;† that St. Nicholas, a holy infant, uſed regularly abſtain from ſuck on Wedneſdays and Fridays ;‡ that St. Benedict, founder of an order of monks, uſed to work miracles habitually, raiſe the dead to life, and ſing pſalms before he was born ;§ and that St. Patrick was wont

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* Breviarum Romanum, Die xxvi. Maii.

† *Ibid.* Die ix. Octobris.

‡ *Ibid.* Die vi. Decembris.

§ *Ibid.* Die xxi. Martii. This ſtrange incident is thus gravely narrated by the Ciſtercian poet, F. Nicholas Bravo. in his *Benedictina*, on the authority of Bonifacius Simoneta, an abbot of his order :—

——" Encarcelado en el lugar materno,
Alegres mueſtras el infante dava,
Articulando con un ſon ſuperno
La voz que claro afuera reſonava ;
Ya en eſto el nino delicada y tierno
El gozo celeſtial pronoſticava,
Pues, aunque en carcel tenebroſa y negra

to repeat daily the whole pſalter, together with the canticles, and two hundred hymns and prayers; three hundred times on each day to worſhip God upon his knees, and in each canonical hour of the day to ſign himſelf one hundred times with the ſign of the croſs. Dividing the night into three portions, he ſpent the firſt in running through one hundred pſalms, and in two hundred genuflexions; the ſecond, in running through the other fifty pſalms, immerſed in cold water; and with his heart, eyes, and hands, raiſed to heaven, he yielded the third part to a ſhort ſleep upon a hard ſtone.*

Miſs Nano Nagle, a ſtriking illuſtration, in even recent times, of the dreadful and degrading ſyſtem of monachiſm—an engine of deſtruction wielded with powerful effect in

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Con celeſtiales canticos ſe alegra.
Que pudo ſer la vida de eſte infante,
Sino contento, jubilo, alborozo,
Pues fin mira del ſol la luz radiante,
Antes que ſepa el llanto, mueſtra el gozo
Ya da indicios alegres de triumphante
Del infernal y Tartaro deſtrozo,
Semejante al Baptiſta en gloria tanta,
Pues donde dança Juan, Benito canta."

* S. Patritius *Breviarum Romanum.* Die xvii. Martii. Antverpæ, 1823.

advancing the intereſts of the Papal church—was well known as the founder of the Preſentation Order of nuns in Ireland. To ſuch an extent was her mind influenced by religious fanaticiſm, that ſhe remained almoſt continually in a kneeling poſture, to enhance the merit of her devotions. Her knees became, in conſequence, ulcerated; but ſhe did not ceaſe to aſſume this attitude, nor would ſhe employ a remedy, although there is not the ſlighteſt doubt that ſo protracted an act of auſterity, tended to haſten her diſſolution :*—

> "O judgment, thou haſt fled to brutiſh beaſts,
> And men have loſt their reaſon!"

The eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian, deſcribing Romiſt ſaints, truly obſerves :—

"No models of rational piety are to be found among thoſe pretended worthies, whom they propoſe to chriſtians as objects of imitation. They amuſe their readers with gigantic fables and trifling romances. The example they exhibit are thoſe of certain delirious *fanatics*, whom they call *ſaints;* men of a corrupt and perverted judgment, who offered violence to reaſon and nature by the

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* *Vide* Life of Miſs Nano Nagle.

horrors of an extravagant auſterity in their own conduct, and by the ſeverity of thoſe ſingular and inhuman rules which they preſcribed to others. For, by what means were theſe men *ſainted?* By ſtarving themſelves with a frantic obſtinacy, and bearing the uſeleſs hardſhips of hunger, thirſt, and inclement ſeaſons, with ſteadfaſtneſs and perſeverance; by running about the country like madmen, in tattered garments, and ſometimes half naked, or ſhutting themſelves up in a narrow ſpace, where they continued motionleſs; by ſtanding for a long time in certain poſtures, with their eyes cloſed, in the enthuſiaſtic expectation of divine light. All this was ſaint-like and glorious; and the more that any ambitious fanatic departed from the dictates of reaſon and common ſenſe, and counterfeited the wild geſtures and the incoherent conduct of an idiot, or a lunatic, the ſurer was his proſpect of obtaining an eminent rank among the heroes and demi-gods of a corrupt and degenerate church."*

Perhaps no other religious ſyſtem has given riſe to ſuch groſs extravagances as chriſtianity, when miſtaken and perverted, is known

* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. lib. ii. cent. vi. p. ii. c. iii. § 7.

to have ſuperinduced. That the pureſt and moſt perfect code of ethical philoſophy ever propounded to the world ſhould have been the indirect cauſe of human error, folly, and crime, is truly lamentable, and ſhould teach us to pity as well as to condemn the weakneſſes and abſurdities of mankind. Generally, perhaps, we are all too liable to be led away by our firſt emotions, when peruſing the various examples of fanaticiſm which the hiſtorian has recorded, and of pronouncing an unmitigated cenſure, never once taking into account the peculiar circumſtances conducing to ſuch a rude and unnatural condition of things. This is undoubtedly an original and grave error. There is an imbecility quite as much the effect of time and place, as of organization and ignorance. If intention be taken into account, no one is fooliſh, and even monaſticiſm is wiſe if the *rationalé* thereof could be admitted. What, indeed, could be expected of a reaſonable character at an epoch when Reaſon itſelf had been dethroned, and when Fanaticiſm uſurped ſupreme ſway over the human mind? When, in point of faith, no axioms of morality were more firmly eſtabliſhed than the belief that every indulgence was criminal; that what-

ever gratified the ſenſes, however apparently innocent, muſt be injurious to the ſoul ;* that the ties of human affection weaned the heart from God ;† that the duties of ſocial life muſt be abandoned by thoſe who regarded their ſalvation ;‡ and that in proportion as a man inflicted privations and heaped torments upon himſelf, he pleaſed his Creator ? § What, indeed, could be expected under a perverted moral *régime* like this, different to that which the page of hiſtory ſo painfully records ? And what can be expected of a diſſimilar nature, ſo long as the like morbid and diſtorted notions of "pure and undefiled religion" continue to be countenanced, nay, even recommended by thoſe who certainly ought to know better, and whoſe ſacred duty

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* Aldhelm, writing to his pupil Adelwold, deſires him to avoid conviviality, the culpable exerciſe of riding, or any "accurſed pleaſures of bodily indulgence."—*Anglia Sacr.* 1.

† Dimitte omnia, et invenies omnia.—If thou leaveſt all for God, thou ſhalt find all in God.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

‡ Facilis via de cellâ ad cœlum. Vix unquam aliquis è cellâ infernum deſcendit. From the cell to heaven the way is very eaſy ; one can ſcarcely go down from thence into hell.—*St. Bernard.*

§ The religious ſuffers to render himſelf more acceptable to God.—*Liguori.*

it is, as teachers of chriſtianity, to inculcate the reverſe? But the Romiſh church is very fearful of change; conſequently, ſhe conſerves everything and reforms nothing. To be conſiſtent with herſelf ſhe is neceſſitated ſo to do; although the very guarding againſt innovation manifeſtly implies tenacity of obſolete barbariſm. Hence, when the omnipotence of modern thought entered within the *penetralia* of the Convent of St. Maur, and the learned Benedictines tried the experiment of commuting certain tireſome duties of the Rule, as unworthy of the age in which they lived, and with the view of proſecuting more unremittingly the purſuit of learning, and iſſuing more frequently valuable publications, the diſpenſation was immediately refuſed—as a daring innovation.*

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* *Vide* "D'Iſraeli's Curioſities of Literature with reference to the Benedictines."

CHAPTER IV.

Character of those who embraced the Monastic Profession.

"Monastic institutions were in the first ages merely superstitious; but they ended in being eminently corrupt and wicked."

WITH reference to the character of those self-righteous Pharisees, who sought, both in the desert and the cell, to attain a transcendental purity and perfection by the regular performance of a certain routine of duties, and the scrupulous observance of rules and constitutions, as absurd in their nature as they were degrading to social beings, I shall, in the first instance, take an extract from the writings of Rutilius, a celebrated traveller, who, upon visiting the island of Capraria, originally inhabited by wild goats, and taking its name from that circumstance,

expreſſed his ſurpriſe, on beholding its new inhabitants, in the following terms:—

"The whole iſland is filled, or rather defiled, by men who fly from the light. They call themſelves monks, or ſolitaries, becauſe they deſire to live alone, without any witneſſes of their actions. They fear the gifts of fortune from the apprehenſion of loſing them; and leſt they ſhould be miſerable, they embrace a life of voluntary wretchedneſs. How abſurd is their choice, how perverſe their underſtanding, to dread the evils without being able to ſupport the bleſſings of the human condition. Either this melancholy madneſs is the effect of diſeaſe, or elſe the conſciouſneſs of guilt urges theſe unhappy men to exerciſe on their own bodies the tortures which are inflicted on fugitive ſlaves by the hands of juſtice."*

Another writer,† alluding to that diviſion of the Franciſcan order, denominated the "Spirituals," obſerves:—

"So mad were theſe monks, that they conceived there was more honour in living

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* Claud. Rutul. Numation. Itinerar. I. 439.

† The author of the Life of the Regent Murray, patron of the Reformation in Scotland.

by beggary than in any other profeſſion. They roved about barefooted, and clad in coarſe raiment, whining in every diſtrict, and rejoicing in their poverty; and at this period the miraculous ſight was ſeen of a great ſchiſm in the church, occaſioned ſolely by the fanaticiſm of thoſe wealthy votaries of St. Francis, the prince of beggars. * * * *

"But the truth is, if we reckon not the bodily mortifications to which thoſe devotees might have ſubmitted, there was literally nothing in all this profeſſion of beggary which deſerved the name; for though they undoubtedly ſubſiſted by alms, it was not defined of what theſe alms ſhould conſiſt; and hence, although beggary was their glory, and the order of mendicancy their higheſt boaſt, they nevertheleſs, in ſuperſtitious times, fared not much worſe than thoſe who ſaw no cauſe for glorying in ſuch a diſtinction. And the influence which they poſſeſſed by thus aſſociating themſelves with men of all ranks, and by this accommodation of themſelves to every condition, enabled them to preſerve the protection of the great, to gain ready acceſs to every habitation, to interfere in every domeſtic circle, and to obtain devotees to their confeſſionals. They were, in ſhort, a ſet of

peripatetic eccleſiaſtics; and latterly, like all the other orders, they degenerated into roving prieſts."*

Dalzell, after employing the epithet "truly licenſed vagabonds," proceeds to ſay of the monks:—"Their only juſt characteriſtics were ignorance and aſſurance, levying a general contribution for their maintenance. Their buſineſs was to keep the people as ignorant as themſelves, and to inculcate a profound veneration for ſaints, relics, and the miniſters of the church. Their manners were rude, brutal, and rapacious. They were vagrant monks."†

It is a matter of undoubted teſtimony that, ſo ignorant were many of the eccleſiaſtics of the ſixteenth century that they believed the New Teſtament to be written by Martin Luther, and conſequently regarded it as a wicked book. Müller relates that, about the time of the Reformation a biſhop of Dunfeldt congratulated himſelf upon never having learned Greek or Hebrew. The monks aſſerted that all hereſies aroſe from the Greek. "The New Teſtament," ſaid one of the

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* Life of George Buchanan.

† Curſory Remarks, vol. i. p. 16.

fraternity, "is a book full of ſerpents and thorns. Greek is a *modern* language, recently invented, againſt which we muſt be on our guard. As to Hebrew, my dear brethren, it is certain that whoever ſtudies it becomes immediately a Jew!" Even the Pariſian School of Theology ſolemnly put forth this announcement:—"There is an end of religion if the ſtudy of Hebrew and Greek is permitted." Perhaps this almoſt incredible ignorance is not to be wondered at when we bear in mind that, as late as the year 1400 ſcarce any book, except miſſals, was found in Rome. Of courſe, there have been ſome noble exceptions to the general rule; and, as I before obſerved, ſeveral learned monks applied themſelves diligently and laborioufly to Herculean taſks, and tenacioufly preſerved and carefully tranſcribed works of utility and merit, which, but for their labours, would never have been tranſmitted to poſterity.

Moſheim, the eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian, ſpeaking of monkiſh orders, ſays:—"The multitude had ſuch a high opinion of thoſe ſturdy beggars, and of their credit with the Supreme Being, that great numbers of both ſexes, ſome in health, others in a ſtate of infirmity, others at the point of death, earneſtly deſired to be

admitted into the mendicant orders, which they looked upon as a ſafe and infallible method of rendering heaven propitious. Many made it an eſſential part of their laſt wills, that their carcaſſes, after death, ſhould be wrapped in old ragged Dominican or Franciſcan habits, and interred among the mendicants. For ſuch was the barbarous ſuperſtition and wretched ignorance of this age, that people univerſally believed they ſhould readily obtain mercy from Chriſt at the day of judgment, if they appeared before his tribunal aſſociated with the mendicant friars." *

Nicholas de Clemangius, pupil of the celebrated Gerſon, rector of the Univerſity of Paris, and Secretary to Benedict XII., a man of no ordinary powers of mind, and a profound and accompliſhed ſcholar, who, from the circumſtance of his being connected with the Papal court, muſt have had peculiar facilities afforded him of acquiring information upon eccleſiaſtical matters, thus writes, in his deſcription of the monaſtic orders :—

" I ſhould have much to ſay of the monks and monaſtics, were I not long ere this weary of the enumeration of ſo many and ſuch great

* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 660. (Soames.)

abominations. Yet, not to ſuffer them to paſs wholly untouched, it is neceſſary to ſay ſomething. But what good can be ſaid of thoſe who, in proportion as they are bound by their vows to be perfect above all other ſons of the church, abſtracted from the care of worldly things, which they have renounced, and raiſed up to the contemplation of heavenly things alone; in proportion as they are obliged to be more temperate, leſs diſpoſed to wander, and to go more ſeldom from the walls of their cloiſter into public, in the ſame proportion exhibit themſelves, on the contrary, as more than others, ſtrangers to all theſe obligations; more graſping, more avaricious, more immerſed in ſecular affairs, more ſlippery, more undiſciplined, diſſolute, and reſtleſs, more prone to run about into public, and even, if the reins are looſened, indecent places; ſo as that nothing is ſo odious to them as the cell and the cloiſter, reading and prayer, their rule and their profeſſion. Wherefore they are monks indeed in their outward habit, but in life, in practice, inwardly in the defilement of their conſciences, they are very far removed from that perfection which their habit pretends. Verily they grievouſly deceive themſelves. For the more they aban-

don their profeſſion, and ſeek eagerly after earthly riches, ſo much the leſs do they really hold, and ſo much the more do their endowments and revenues run away to nothing.

"The nuns only now remain. * * * But modeſty forbids me to ſay much of theſe, though I have much to ſay, leſt we ſhould draw out to too great length a diſcourſe which ſhould apply not to a choir of virgins dedicated to God, but rather to * * * * * * * * and the impure practices of unchaſtity. For what, I pray you, are the nunneries now but ſanctuaries—not of God, but of Venus?"*

The ſame writer further obſerves:—"I would not that any ſhould ſuppoſe that I involve all our eccleſiaſtics, without any exception, in ſuch charges. I know that he did not, and could not lie, who ſaid, 'Peter, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Nor am I ignorant that there are in every ſtation ſome, and perhaps many, good, juſt, and innocent men, who ſtand aloof from thoſe crimes which have been mentioned. But ſo great is the overflow of the wicked in all

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* Compare Ivo of Charles, Ep. 70, and the note of Juretus upon that place.

profeſſions, that ſcarce one in a thouſand can be found who honeſtly performs what his profeſſion requires. Nay, if there chances to be ſome ſimple, chaſte, and frugal man, in a college or convent, who does not purſue the broad and ſlippery road, he is made a jeſt of by the reſt, and is preſently called an oddity, or ſingular perſon, a madman, or a hypocrite. Whence alſo many who might have turned out well, if they had lived with modeſt and good men, drawn away in this manner by the company of evil comrades, are led into evil, through fear of incurring ſuch nicknames in their fraternities."*

I may, perhaps, indulge the hope that enlightened Romaniſts will receive with reſpect a teſtimony emanating from the pen of ſo talented and diſtinguiſhed a member of their communion.

The moderate and candid Caſſander, alluding to the low ſtate of morals amongſt the religious orders of his time, remarks :—

"It is ſufficiently manifeſt of itſelf how much monkery has degenerated from its firſt origin, and with what abuſes it has become con-

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* De Corrupto Stat. Eccles. Lib. in Faſc. Rer. Expet. et Fug. tom. ii. Lond. 1690.

taminated. The empty obſervance of ceremonies has ſo impaired and obſcured religion amongſt moſt monks, that you will hardly find anywhere a more licentious and profane mode of life than that which is practiſed in ſome monaſteries. So that it is no wonder if, as the monaſtic life generally now is, it is expoſed to the hatred and reprehenſion of many."*

As a further teſtimony of the inconſiſtency of character in perſons profeſſing to be ſcrupulouſly obſervant of the rules of monaſtic life, I ſhall adduce the evidence of one who, for ſeveral years, both in the capacity of a novice, and a profeſſed nun, was in connection with the *Hotel Dieu Nunnery*, at Montreal:—

"I have often reflected," obſerves the writer, "how grievouſly I had been deceived in my opinion of a nun's condition! All the holineſs of their lives, I now ſaw, was merely pretended. The appearance of ſanctity and heavenly-mindedneſs which they had ſhown amongſt us novices, I found was only a diſguiſe to conceal ſuch practices as would not be tolerated in any decent ſociety in the world; and as for peace and joy like that of heaven,

* Inter opp. Grotii. Theol. tom. iii. p. 608.

which I had expected to find among them, I learned too well that they did not exiſt *here.*"*

I ſhall now allude to the declaration drawn up and ſigned by ſix nuns of St. Catherine of Piſtoia, and preſented to the Grand Duke Leopold, A. D. 1775, which makes mention of the profligacy and groſs impiety of the Dominican fathers; in conſequence of which complaint five convents were removed from the direction of theſe confeſſors. In it they obſerve:—

"Inſtead of allowing us to remain in our ſimplicity, and protecting our innocence, they teach us both by word and action, all kinds of indecencies. They come frequently to the ſacriſty, of which they poſſeſs the keys. When, beſides this they find any occaſion or pretence for entering the nunnery, they remain alone with their favourites in their cells. All are alike, not excepting the provincials. They utter the worſt expreſſions, ſaying, that we ſhould look upon it as a great happineſs in having the power of ſatisfying our appetites without being expoſed to the annoyance of bringing up children. They ſuffer

* Sequel to the Diſcloſures of Maria Monk.

the nuns to remain away a long time from the ſacraments, and are at no pains to induce mental prayer, but preach only about the happineſs of this life. The nuns, who live according to ſuch direction, are praiſed and gratified in everything, however extravagant. The others muſt needs ſtrain their conſciences, or be in a perpetual warfare.*

In addition to this document, a confirmatory depoſition, of a more prolix kind and leſs abounding in generalities, was, in reply to ſeveral interrogatories, made by Siſter Flavia Peraccini. Amongſt many particulars ſhe mentions that—

"Every year when the monks bring to us the holy water, they upſet it in their playing with the nuns. What revels they make! One time they waſhed Father Manni's face, and dreſſed him up as a nun. In ſhort, they made ſcenes of conſtant amuſement for themſelves, &c. Do not ſay that theſe things occur alone in our convent. They go on at St. Lucia, at Prato, at Piſa, at Perugia, and I have heard things that would aſtoniſh. In them all there are the ſame proceedings, in all the ſame diſorders, in all the ſame abuſes.

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* Roſcoe's Life of Scipio de Ricci, vol. i.

A monk ſaid to myſelf that if a nun's veil were placed on one pole, and a monk's cowl on another, ſo great is the force of ſympathy that the veil and the cowl would come together and unite. I ſay, and repeat it, that whatever the ſuperiors know, they do not know the leaſt portion of the great evils that paſs between the monks and the nuns."

The founder of the famous Benedictines, in the opening of the rule of his order, fails not to animadvert upon the degeneracy of the fraternity. By the way, this rule has been compared to Aaron's rod, becauſe it ſwallowed up all the others. At the ſecond Council of Douzy, in 876, it was declared to be an inſpired work, of equal authority with the canonical Scriptures and the writings of the Catholic doctors. Leo, archbiſhop of Ravenna, calls it a divine rule, dictated by the Holy Ghoſt, and leading infallibly to heaven. The Grand Duke, Coſmo de Medici, ſtudied it, that he might there learn how to govern his eſtates; and Calmet affirms, that in this work St. Benedict has preſented an ideal of the moſt excellent monarchy and the moſt perfect government. More than two hundred works have been written upon it, of which the beſt is a Com-

mentary, in two quarto volumes, by Calmet himſelf. The original rule, an autograph of Benedict, was burnt A. D. 897, in the monaſtery of Theano, when that edifice was conſumed by fire. Some far more curious relics were deſtroyed at the ſame time, the ſacks in which food uſed to be ſent to the ſaint from heaven!—"*Sacci, in quibus juſſu Dei, cœlitus eidem Patri Benedicto eſcæ delatæ ſunt!*"* However, St. Benedict thus writes with reference to the monaſtics:—

"There are four kinds of monks. The firſt is of Cœnobites, that is monaſterial or conventual, living under a rule or abbot. The ſecond kind is of Anchorites, that is hermits, who not by a novitial fervour of devotion, but by a long probation in a monaſtic life, have learnt, with the aſſiſtance of others to fight againſt the devil; and being well armed, are able now, without the ſupport of any other, by God's help, to fight hand to hand againſt the vices of the fleſh and evil cogitations, and ſo proceed from the fraternal army to the ſingle combat of the wilderneſs. The third and fouleſt kind of monks are the Saraibaites, who not having

* Chronicon Caſſinenſe.

been tried under any rule by the experience of a ſkilful maſter, as gold is tried in the furnace, but being ſoft as lead, and ſtill adhering by their actions to the world, are known by their tonſures to be liars unto God; who two or three together, or perhaps ſingly, without a ſhepherd, are ſhut up, not in the Lord's ſheepfold, but in their own; and the pleaſure of their deſires is to them a law; and whatſoever they like or chooſe, this they will have to be holy, and what they miſlike, that not to be lawful. The fourth are they who are called Gyrovagi, who all their life wander through divers provinces, and gueſt-wiſe, ſtay two or three days in one monaſtery, and then in another, and are always ſtrolling and never ſettled, and giving themſelves altogether to their own pleaſures and to the enticements of gluttony, are in all things worſe than the Saraibites, of the moſt miſerable converſation, *of all which it is better to be ſilent than to ſpeak!*"* So far from the pen of St. Benedict.

St. Bernard, abbot, thus deſcribes the

* Trans. of the Rule of St. Benedict, by C. G., prieſt and monk of the Order. Douay, 1638.

worldly-mindedneſs and immorality of the monks of his day :—

" What ſhall I ſay concerning their very dreſs, in which not warmth but colour is ſought after, and neatneſs of apparel, rather than virtue, is conſidered ! *I am aſhamed to declare it !* But even women are ſurpaſſed in their love of dreſs, ſince richneſs of apparel, and not what is neceſſary, is ſtudied by the monks ; nor is even the form of religion retained ! The ſoldiers of Chriſt deſire rather to be gaily dreſſed than to be armed."*

St. Bridget, in her " Revelations," which were recognized by the Councils of Conſtance and Baſle, and by Urban VI., Martin V., and Paul V., after making ſuch remarks on the deportment of the monks and nuns as that I am compelled by feelings of delicacy to conceal them under the veil of the original,† proceeds to ſay :—

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* S. Bern. Ab. in Vig. Nat. Dom. Serm. i. *De Monach.*

† Orta eſt abuſio gravis, in hoc, quod laicis bona eccleſiæ donantur, qui uxores non ducunt propter nomen canonicale, ſed impudentur habent concubinas in domibus ſuis perdies, et in lectis per noctes, dicentes audacter, nos non licet eſſe in connubio, qu'a canonici ſumus. Preſbyteri etiam diaconi et ſubdiaconi, olim in infamiam immundæ vitæ maximè abhorrebant. Nunc autem quidam illorum

"It is a ſad thing to behold their rules changed into deteſtable abuſes." And again, alluding to the nuns, ſhe obſerves:—

"The doors through which the ſiſters are pleaſed to afford an entrance to clergy and laity, are open even at night; and therefore ſuch places reſemble rather houſes of bad fame than holy cloiſters!"*

In the Homilies of the Anglican church we are preſented with the following vivid delineation of monaſticiſm, as it appeared at a more modern epoch:—

"Paſſing over the innumerable ſuperſtitiouſneſs that hath been in ſtrange apparel, in ſilence, in dormitory, in cloiſter, in chapter, in choice of meats and drinks, and in ſuch like things, let us conſider what enormities and abuſes have been in the three principal points, which they call the three eſſentials, or chief foundations of religion; that is to

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manifeſtè lætantur in eo, quod meretrices eorum intumeſcente ventre veniunt inter alias ambulare. Nec etiam pudet eos ſi ab amicis eorum dicitur eis, ecce, domine, citò natus erit vobis filius vel filia!—*Revelationem S. Birgittæ*, lib. iv. c. 33. (*Edit. Coloniæ*, 1829.)

* Portæ indifferenter clericis et laicis quibus placet ſororibus introitum dare etiam in ipſis noctibus ſunt apertæ. Et ideò talia loca ſimiliora lupanaribus, quàm ſanctis clauſtris. —*Revel. S. Birgittæ*, lib. iv. c. 33.

ſay, *obedience*, *chaſtity*, and *wilful poverty*. Firſt, under pretence or colour of obedience to their father in religion, which obedience they made themſelves, they were made free by their rules and canons from the obedience of their natural father and mother, and from the obedience of emperor and king, and all temporary power, whom of very duty, by God's laws, they were bound to obey. And ſo the profeſſion of their obedience not due, was a forſaking of their due obedience. And how their profeſſion of chaſtity was kept, it is more honeſt to paſs over in ſilence, and let the world judge of what is well known, than with unchaſte words, by expreſſing of their unchaſte life, to offend chaſte and godly ears. And as for their wilful poverty, it was ſuch that, when in poſſeſſions, jewels, plate, and riches, they were equal or above merchants, gentlemen, barons, earls, and dukes;* yet by this ſubtile, ſophiſtical term, *proprium in communi*, that is to ſay, proper in common, they mocked the world; perſuading that not-

* Abbots and priors as late as the 18th century, governed their abbeys with ſovereign control; and their revenues and poſſeſſions were ſo great as to entitle them to ſeats in Parliament among the peers.—*Monaſticon Hibernicum*, by Mervin Archdall, A.M. M.R.I.A.

withſtanding all their poſſeſſions and riches, yet they kept their vow, and were in wilful poverty. But for all their riches, they might neither help father nor mother, nor other that were indeed very needy and poor, without the licenſe of their father-abbot, prior, or warden; and yet they might take of every man, but they might not give aught to any man; no, not to thoſe whom the laws of God bound them to help * * * * * And the longer prayers they uſed by day and night, under pretence and colour of holineſs, to get the favour of widows and other ſimple folk, that they might ſing trentalles and ſervice for their huſbands and friends, and admit or receive them into their prayers, the more truly is verified of them the ſaying of Chriſt: 'Woe unto you ſcribes, and phariſees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houſes under colour of long prayers, therefore your condemnation ſhall be the greater.'"*

We have, further, a very appalling picture preſented to us of monaſtic profligacy, drawn by the maſterly hand of the Rev. Joſeph Blanco White, once a prieſt of the Romiſt Church, and chaplain to the king of Spain.

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* Homily of Good Works, part iii.

After deſcribing, at great length, the immoral practices of the Spaniſh eccleſiaſtics, and other prieſts of his acquaintance, ſome of whom, in conſequence of their depraved habits, were prematurely cut off the ſtage of exiſtence in a ſtate of frantic inſanity, he proceeds to remark of the nuns :—

" The picture of female convents requires a more delicate pencil. Yet I cannot find tints ſufficiently dark and gloomy to portray the miſeries which I have witneſſed in their inmates. Crime, indeed, makes its way into thoſe receſſes, in ſpite of the ſpiked walls and priſon gates which protect the inhabitants. *This I know with all the certainty which the ſelf-accuſation of the guilty can give!* It is, beſides, a notorious fact, that the nunneries in Eſtremadura and Portugal are frequently infected with vice of the groſſeſt kind."*

Speaking of the character of the ſecular and regular clergy of the 12th century, Moſheim obſerves :—

" Of the flagitious conduct, the frauds, the ignorance, and the corruption of the inferior biſhops, the prieſts, and the deacons,

* Practical and Internal Evidence againſt Catholiciſm. (Lond. 1825.)

the whole hiſtory of theſe times, and the laws of the eccleſiaſtical councils, afforda m ple teſtimony. It is not ſtrange, therefore, that the monks were in higher repute than the ſecular clergy; for being bound by their vows and by their reſpective rules of life, they had fewer opportunities of committing crimes. And yet theſe monks, who claimed pre-eminence in the church, and deſpiſed and inveighed againſt both the ſecular clergy and the regular canons, had in moſt places departed entirely from their inſtitutions and rules, and exhibited to the public patterns of vice and wickedneſs, rather than of virtue. The Cluniacenſians were for a long time the beſt and moſt devout among the Benedictines; but under their abbot, Pontius, being loaded with wealth and riches by the liberality of the pious, they entirely laid aſide their former ſtrictneſs, and copied after the baſe lives of the other Benedictines. And, although ſome of the ſucceeding abbots endeavoured to cure the evil, their efforts fell far below their wiſhes and their expectations; nor could the primitive ſanctity of Clugni ever be reſtored."*

* Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 457-8. (Soames.)

Archbiſhop Leighton in alluding to the vaunted ſupernaturaliſm of the religious orders, thus quaintly and ironically obſerves :—

" They ſeem to make holineſs a kind of impropriate good, that the common ſort can have little ſhare in almoſt all piety, being ſhut up within cloiſter walls as its only fit dwelling. Yet it hath not liked their lodging it ſeems, but is flown over the walls away from them, for there is little of it even there to be found."*

Although the writers whoſe teſtimony has been adduced may be conſidered of ſufficient authority in affording to the world a true and unexaggerated character of the monaſtic orders ; yet theſe were not the only individuals of note, who, regardleſs of the painful conſequences which ſuch a courſe was likely to involve, openly and fearleſſly expoſed the abominations of monkery, and declaimed loudly againſt the enormities perpetrated in the name of religion, and by thoſe *ſoi-diſant* ſaints whoſe ſanctity was but another name for licentiouſneſs. We find that Robert Goſthead, biſhop of Lincoln, inveighed bitterly againſt the corruption, lewdneſs,

* Life of R. Leighton, D.D. by James Aikman.

and wickedneſs of the ſo-called "religious orders" of his age. In like manner did Matthew Paris, Benedictine Monk of St. Albans, a man juſtly celebrated for his learning and exemplary life,* paint, in the livelieſt colours, the libidinous and corrupt character of his confrères. In Italy, Arnold of Breſcia, a pupil of Peter Abelard, attempted a revolution of eccleſiaſtical manners and abuſes, for which Innocent II. had him baniſhed into Switzerland, having been previouſly condemned in the council of Lateran, A.D. 1139. After the death of this pontiff, his third ſucceſſor, Eugene, to whom Arnold had alſo given cauſe of complaint, ſtipulated with the emperor Frederic I. to deliver Arnold into his hands; upon which he was firſt ſtrangled, then his body was burnt, and his aſhes thrown into the Tiber, A.D. 1155.† William of St. Amour, a doctor of the Sorbonne, a man of wonderful genius, alſo raiſed his voice and employed his pen againſt the whole mendicant orders collectively;

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* He was in great favour with Henry II. and employed by the Pope to reform ſome foreign convents.

† Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 504. (Soames.) Spanheim's Eccles. Ann.

and in a treatiſe "Of the Perils of the latter Times" he applies the predictions of Paul, in 2 Tim. iii. 1., as literally fulfilled in them. This aroused the ire of the Dominicans, who ceaſed not to perſecute him till Alexander IV. A.D. 1256, had his book publicly burnt, and the author himſelf baniſhed from France.* Peter, of Bruges, and Henry his diſciple, likewiſe railed againſt clerical dereliction, and aſſerted, among other things, that "Monks ought to marry;" for which, the one was burnt, and the other impriſoned for life. To theſe might be added Nicolaus de Mazen, abbot of Moelk, in Auſtria; Nicolaus Dünkelſpühl, a profeſſor at Vienna, whoſe labours produced ſome reformatory diſcipline in ſeveral convents of Swabia and Bavaria; Dante, in Italy; Guido Juvenalis, in France, an erudite man; and others; one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed of whom was John Wickliffe, rector of Lutterworth, whoſe bones, to appeaſe the revengeful diſpoſition of his enemies, were dug up and publicly conſumed, A.D. 1428, by order of Martin V. in conjunction with the decree of the council of

* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 564. (Soames.) Spanheim's Eccles. Ann.

Conſtance; which iniquitous edict was executed by Richard Fleming, biſhop of Lincoln.* This is not a ſolitary inſtance of the church wreaking her vengeance upon thoſe who were bold enough to expoſe her enormities, and diſpute her wicked aſſumptions. Her ſtatement, that ſhe is "unchanged and unchangeable" is true, ſo far as a malignant ſpirit is concerned. And ſhe manifeſted the ſame deathleſs hatred to her conſcientious opponents on the acceſſion of Queen Mary to the throne of England, when, by her authority, Cardinal Pole, and other eminent divines of her communion, went to Cambridge, interdicted the churches where the bodies of Bucer and Phagius were laid, and, after a mock trial and blaſphemous ſentence, the remains of theſe noted reformers were dug up, conveyed in their coffins to the market-place, ſet upright, bound with iron chains, and finally conſumed!

From ſo diſguſting a portrait of the degeneracy and ungodly deportment of thoſe who made a ſolemn profeſſion, and wore the garb of ſanctity, it will naturally occur to

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* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 665. (Soames.) Spanheim's Eccles. Ann.

every unprejudiced mind, that there muſt be ſomething fundamentally wrong in a church which could give birth to, foſter and mature, ſuch ſhameleſs immorality. Hiſtory furniſhes us with numerous records of crimes, horrifying and revolting, committed not only within the ſilent receſſes of the cloiſter, but perpetrated viſibly, and without any deſire of concealment, by all degrees of eccleſiaſtics, from the humbleſt monk to the loftieſt dignitary; not excepting even the Sovereign Pontiff who filled the chair of Peter:* and if hiſtory be not an "old almanac," we muſt certainly reſpect and credit its authority. It preſents a melancholy picture of the un-

* Ratherius, biſhop of Verona, ſays, that the clergy were in general ſo immodeſt, that ſcarcely a prieſt was found fit to be ordained biſhop, and ſcarcely a biſhop fit to confer ordination. He recounts ſeveral ſhocking ſtories reſpecting the behaviour of eccleſiaſtics, and he charges them principally with holding infamous converſation with profligate females. Pope Sergius and pope John XI., the latter ſon of the former by his concubine Maroſia, and other pontiffs of the ſame deſcription, by their own profligacy ſet the example to the inferior clergy, of throwing off that maſk, which might otherwiſe conceal their debaucheries from the eyes of the world.—*Rev. Mr. O. Croly's Inquiry*, etc. Dublin, 1835.

Vide Baronii Annales (Antverpio 1603). Genebrardi Chron. A.C. 904. (Paris, 1585.)

righteous living of thoſe whoſe peculiar duty it was to practiſe and inculcate the pure precepts of chriſtianity; the darkneſs, ſuperſtition, ignorance, and moral depravity of the univerſal church; and the all but total extinction of true religion. And, if the picture be faithfully drawn, muſt we not acknowledge—does not love for truth force upon us the conviction—that a reformation both in morals and religion was moſt urgently and imperatively required?

So corrupted, indeed, by formal worſhip and ſuperſtitious obſervances, was the profeſſing church, and ſo ſignal was the developement of the "myſtery of iniquity" prior to the burſting forth of the glorious ſun of the Reformation, that I cannot contemplate the long night of Egyptian darkneſs and ignorance, the intellectual bondage and ſpiritual deſolation, the moral depravity and unbluſhing wickedneſs, which then exiſted in all their hideous and naked deformity, without feeling, as did the poet, who, when entering upon his ſurvey of the regions of deſpair, exclaimed:—

> "Nel mezzo del cammin di noſtra vita
> Mi retrovai per una ſelva oſcura,

Che la diritta via era ſmarita:
E quanto a dir, qual' era, e coſi dura,
Queſta ſelva ſelvaggia ed aſpra e forte
Tanto e amara che poco e piu morte."

DANTE INFERNO.

" When life had laboured up her midmoſt ſtage,
And, weary with her mortal pilgrimage,
Stood in ſuſpenſe upon the point of Prime,
Far in a pathleſs grove I chanced to ſtray,
Where ſcarce imagination dares diſplay
The gloomy ſcenery of the ſavage clime.
On the deep horrors of the tangled dale,
With dumb diſmay, the pow'rs of mem'ry dwell—
Scenes terrible as dark impending fate."

BOYD'S DANTE.

CHAPTER V.

Conciſe Hiſtory of the Franciſcan Order.

"The Franciſcan fraternity was early ſplit into factions, which time only ſtrengthened and rendered inveterate; and theſe factions not only diſturbed the peace of the church, but ſhook even the ſovereign powers and majeſty of the Pontiffs themſelves."—MOSHEIM.

HAVE now to direct the reader's attention to the celebrated order of monks, denominated Fra nciſcan, of which St. Francis was the diſtinguiſhed founder.

An attempt to compreſs within narrow limits all the ſtrange incidents connected with the life of this extraordinary man, and the principal conſtitutions of his ſodality, would not be complimentary to the ſeveral able writers who have taken pains to elucidate his hiſtory; nor would it be doing juſtice to the individual himſelf, whoſe ſingular life has furniſhed them with ſuch ample and valuable materials. So

wonderful, however, are many of the circumſtances which have occurred through his inſtrumentality and that of his mendicant aſſociates, that it is quite neceſſary to take a brief review of them, as characteriſtic of the memorable perſonage whoſe name and ſyſtem of diſcipline occupy ſo prominent a place in the pages of hiſtory.

St. Francis was born at Aſſiſi, in Umbria, A.D. 1182. His father, who was a wealthy merchant, had his ſon originally named John; but buſineſs tranſactions bringing the youth much into the ſociety of Frenchmen, he acquired their language readily, and in conſequence was called Franciſcus. His biographers, Bonaventura and Wadding, an Iriſh monk, concur in repreſenting him as an idle, debauched, and profligate young man. A ſerious illneſs, induced by his irregular and licentious habit of life,* had well nigh brought him to the threſhold of the grave. Upon his recovery he exhibited a kind of religious idiotcy; and, having accidentally heard a ſermon from the words, "Provide neither gold, nor ſilver, nor braſs in your purſes, nor ſcrip for your journey," etc., he conceived

* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 560. (Soames.)

that the abſolute renunciation of all worldly goods, and the conſequent condition of penury, was the only way in which to fulfil the goſpel injunction. For a conſiderable time he roamed through the country like a madman. On one occaſion he met with a leper, and diſmounting from his horſe, licked his ſores and adminiſtered to his neceſſities. At another time, falling in with beggars, he diſtributed to them his clothes, and covered himſelf with their filthy rags. He fancied that he was the ſubject of divine viſions; and one day, whilſt praying near the walls of a decayed church, he heard a voice which ſaid: "Go, Francis, and repair my houſe which you ſee is dilapidated!" Accordingly he obeyed the command; took a quantity of his father's merchandiſe, diſpoſed of the ſame, and brought the value to the prieſt. This tranſaction diſpleaſed his father, who made an effort to arreſt him as a lunatic, in which light he was conſidered by moſt of his acquaintance, although ſome were ſilly enough to regard him as a ſaint. By a perſevering courſe of mendicancy he not only raiſed money enough to repair the old church, but to erect two others, one of which was called the church of Portriuncula, near Aſſiſi, where he eſtabliſhed himſelf and founded a

new monaſtic aſſociation upon very ſtringent and ſomewhat novel principles; the profeſſion of abject poverty being a prominent feature of the Franciſcan rule. To ſuch an extreme was this carried, that a monk was not permitted to own even a pſalter or hymn book. The formation of ſuch a fraternity was regarded by the reigning pontiff, Innocent III., as admirably calculated to meet the peculiar exigencies of the church; and at the council of Lateran, he declared his approval of it, in preſence of its founder.

Two years after (A. D. 1217) Cardinal Ugolino, ſubſequently Gregory IX., became patron of an order which, at its ſecond general chapter, had five thouſand members preſent. Hence originated a religious brotherhood, that finally grew ſo coloſſal and powerful as to diſturb ſtates and hurl even a pope from his dominions. The biographers of St. Francis mention, that upon one occaſion, as he was praying for more conformity with Chriſt, he received upon his perſon the ſacred ſtigmatica; that is, ſcars, or fungus fleſh, repreſenting the five wounds of the Saviour—a deception moſt likely got up by the monks in order to enhance the reputation of their order, and procure a larger ſale of the indulgences with which they,

and the Dominicans, were privileged by the popes for their ſupport—having abjured all earthly riches. Benedict XII. gave his ſanction to this abſurd fable of the miraculous impreſſment, by ordaining a feſtival in commemoration of the event. Francis, having lived as an invalid at Aſſiſi, for two years, died on the 4th of October, 1226; and in 1230 he was canonized, and placed in the calendar of ſaints, by Gregory IX.

How an order of monks ſuch as the diſcalced or barefooted Franciſcans, poſſeſſing few, if indeed any inducements to deſert ſocial life, and eſtabliſhed on principles ſo extremely rigorous and auſtere, could have increaſed in ſuch an extenſive and rapid manner, is a ſubject which muſt aſſuredly produce no ſmall degree of ſurpriſe in the minds of thoſe who have ſtudied its origin, and are familiar with its early hiſtory. Even the very diſgrace conſequent upon mendicancy, a primary and eſſential part of their code, one ſhould ſuppoſe, would be an impediment quite ſufficient to check the progreſs of ſuch an inſtitution. But, as a ſenſible writer juſtly remarks, "the eccleſiaſtics of that age had the happy art of making everything ſubſervient to their own individual intereſt, as well as to

that peculiar eſtabliſhment with which they were connected, that the profeſſion of beggary, ſo far from being looked upon as humiliatory, was regarded as an honourable, if not the moſt honourable of all engagements."* Moreover, to ſuch a degree of celebrity did theſe monks arrive, that they ruled not merely the monaſtic orders of their day, but, although it may ſound diſcordant in modern ears attuned to the doctrine of infallibility, even the very court of Rome itſelf.† The pontifical aſſemblies, as well

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* Life of Buchanan.

† Not only has the Roman Pontiff's authority been conſidered of equal weight with that of a General Council, but it has ſometimes been actually placed, not only above councils, but even the decrees of the Apoſtles themſelves! Andradius ſaith :—"Liquet eos minime erraſſe, qui dicunt Romanum Pontificem poſſe non nunquam in legibus diſpenſare a Paulo et primis quatuor conciliis. Minime vero majores noſtri religione et pietate excellentes Apoſtolorum hæc et quam plurima alia decreta refigere in animum induxiſſent niſi intellexiſſent," etc.—*Andrad. lib.* ii., *de Trid. Fid.*

"It is manifeſt that thoſe have not erred who ſay, that the Roman Pontiff can ſometimes diſpenſe with obeying the laws of the apoſtle Paul, and of the four firſt Councils; nay, our anceſtors, men of great piety and religion, have BROKEN AND ANNULLED MANY DECREES OF THE APOSTLES!"

A diſtinguiſhed Cardinal of the Romiſt church writes:—"Si Papa erraret in præcipiendo vitia, vel prohibendo vir-

as the councils of the ſtate, bowed alike implicitly to their dictates, and each acquieſced in their deciſion.

But the pinnacle of glory to which theſe monks attained, and the ſceptre of authority which they ſwayed, were but preludes to a terrible downfall; a diſaſter highly aggravated by the eminence from which they fell, and the princely influence they had exerciſed. Neither the patronage of John XXII., nor their former popularity, could ſcreen them from univerſal diſapprobation and cenſure. Owing to the imperious and inſolent manner in which, like deſpotic rulers, they employed their power, councils had aſſembled in many kingdoms and provinces of Europe, with the expreſs deſign of rendering every poſſible op-

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tutes, teneretur Eccleſia credere vitia eſſe bona et virtutes mala, niſi vellet contra conſcientiam peccare."—*Bellar. L.* iv. *de Pont. f. cap.* 5.

"Should the pope err in commanding vices, and forbidding virtues, the church ſhould be bound to believe that the *vices were good*, and the *virtues bad*, unleſs ſhe would ſin againſt conſcience!"

Again, pope Innocent III. ſays:—"Secundum plenitudinem poteſtatis de jure, ſupra jus, poſſumus diſpenſare."—*Decret. de conceſs. præbend. Tit.* iii., *cap. propoſuit.*

"We may, according to the plenitude of our power, diſpenſe with the law, and above the law!"

poſition to their proceedings, and of checking the progreſs of their aſſumed dominion. In like manner, the principal eccleſiaſtics of the Univerſities of Paris and Oxford, united their combined and vigorous energies to procure the total ſuppreſſion of the Franciſcan order.*

Nor did oppoſition to theſe clerical deſpots terminate here. They and their vices were ridiculed and expoſed by various eminent writers; among the moſt powerful of whom was the celebrated and learned Buchanan, who, according to the teſtimony of Le Laboureur, was himſelf once connected with the order. The principal works of Buchanan are the "*Somnium*," "*Alcoranus Franciſcanorum*," and the "*Franciſcanus*," or the "Franciſcan;" the laſt of which, together with the Satire of Sir David Lindſay, entitled "The Three Eſtates," was made the ſubject of a drama. The former was acted before James V., and the latter in preſence of the king, queen, and courtiers at Linlithgow, on the feſtival of the Epiphany, A.D. 1539.

Thoſe individuals who had the moral reſolution to make an *expoſé* of the depravity

*Wood's Antiq. Oxon. tom. i. p. 150.

and ungodlineſs of the Franciſcan monks, experienced, for the moſt part, the dire effects of their deep-rooted malevolence. The unhappy friar Killore fell a holocauſt at their demonial ſhrine; while others, among whom was Buchanan, were condemned to the Inquiſition.

Buchanan, accompanied by eleven others, attended the celebrated Govea to the Univerſity of Coimbra, in Portugal, in the year 1547, at this time patroniſed by John III., the exiſting monarch. Being ſuſpected of favouring the principles of the Reformation, he, with two members of the Univerſity, was ſeized and brought before the tribunal of the Inquiſition. Before this mock juſtice-ſeat he was privately accuſed of having eaten fleſh-meat during Lent, of vilifying the monks, and of being altogether a dangerous and unſafe perſon; whereupon he was caſt into one of thoſe infernal dungeons—upon whoſe portals may fitly be inſcribed the epigraph of Dante—

"Per me ſi va nella citta dolente:
Per me ſi va nell' eterno dolore:
Per me ſi va tra la perduta genta."

"Through me you paſs into the city of woe:
Through me you paſs into eternal pain:
Through me among the people loſt for aye."

CANTO iii. 1.

There can be no doubt but that the Portugueſe eccleſiaſtics had heard of the ſevere attacks made upon the monaſtic orders by Buchanan; and, therefore, they did not let the opportunity eſcape for gratifying their vindictive feelings. This perſecuted individual, although confined for nearly two years in the Inquiſition, and cloſely ſhut up for ſeveral months in a monaſtery, in order that he might be *edified* by the ſaintly deportment of its inmates, and thereby be induced to abandon his heretical opinions, yet knew not why he was deprived of his liberty, or what acts of his drew down upon him the fierce diſpleaſure of his ſavage perſecutors. Happily, however, he eſcaped the rack and the flames; and on being finally liberated, with the conſent of the king, he embarked from Liſbon for England—leaving, with feelings of inexpreſſible delight, a country whoſe very atmoſphere was impregnated with the atrocities of its inhabitants; and where men, profeſſing to be diſpenſers of the oracles of God, and upholders of the chriſtian faith, were, in truth, nothing leſs than propagators of the "doctrines of demons," and ſupporters of the impoſitions of Satan.—

"Monſtrum horrendum informe horribile ingens."

But to reſume. The moſt inveterate enemies which the Franciſcans had to contend with were, ſtrange to ſay, the monks of St. Dominic!*

"When Greek met Greek, then came the tug of war."

There is ſo much impiety connected with the hiſtory of the Franciſcans, ſo much cruelty with that of the Dominicans, and ſo much flagitious and blaſphemous impoſture with both, that the founders of theſe ſeveral orders can hardly be ſeen in their true characters. "Theſe two moſt powerful orders," writes the hiſtorian, "contended with each other for precedence; and attacked and warred upon each other in their publications, and with invectives and criminations. Attempts were frequently made to ſtop theſe contentions; but the fire-brand that kindled them could never be extinguiſhed."†

Thoſe fiery bigots, who were the chief actors in the Inquiſitional courts, and the ſtern diſpenſers of eccleſiaſtical rigour, purſued the Franciſcans with that peculiar fero-

* Painters repreſent him by a dog with a fire-brand in its mouth, owing to a dream which his mother had when *enceinte*.

† Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 555-6. (Soames.)

city for which they were proverbial, until their implacable reſentment became ſomewhat abated by conſigning to the flames ſeveral of thoſe unfortunate beings who were the objects of their diſpleaſure. So much for the unity of the Papal church and her eccleſiaſtical orders! "Papal uniformity," ſays a talented writer, "is like the hard and glittering ſurface of an ice-bound chaos, dazzling without, but impriſoning all within."* And truly there is a union in ignorance, as all things are confounded together in the dark!

At length a ſchiſm, fraught with direful conſequences, took place in this diſtinguiſhed fraternity. The primary cauſe which led to ſo ſingular a reſult, was a difference of opinion reſpecting the particular habit or dreſs of the order, and the extent to which its worldly poſſeſſions ſhould be carried.

Frequent attempts were made by ſucceſſive pontiffs to mitigate the ſeverity of the conſtitutions of St. Francis, which were extremely rigid with regard to the poſſeſſions of the monks. But theſe attempts proved

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* Rev. James Godkin's Guide from the Church of Rome.

unſucceſsful. The order, however, in a ſhort time, became divided into two great parties. The one oppoſed the juriſdiction of the pope; the other received all his decrees, and ſubmitted to his authority. The former were denominated Anti-papal Franciſcans, and conſiſted of the Fratricelli, or Minorites, the Tertiaries, or Beghards, and the Spirituals. The latter were ſtyled the Brethren of the Community. This claſs having the advantage of ſuperior numbers, laboured very zealouſly to exterminate the Spirituals. Clement V. being then pope, was deſirous to effect a reconciliation between parties ſo oppoſed; and for this purpoſe he iſſued the bull, "*Exivi de paradiſo*," which enjoined the ſtricteſt poverty on the whole order, and prohibited the poſſeſſion of any property, except what was indiſpenſable for their immediate wants; although at the ſame time, it permitted thoſe of the order who reſided in diſtricts or localities where the neceſſaries of life were not attainable, to erect ſtore-houſes, or granaries, to which they could reſort in times of ſcarcity. This bull pleaſed the French brethren extremely well; but as the Italian monks were determined to remain obſtinate, they refuſed to be ruled by the

pope's mandate; and in order to ſet themſelves at liberty from the power and authority of their ſpiritual rulers, ſome of them evacuated their country, and went to Sicily; while others were ſent into exile by Creſcentius, general of the order.*

After much labour and repeated endeavours on the part of Clement to ſubdue the turbulent ſpirit of the French Franciſcans, he finally ſucceeded. But the tranquillity which enſued, unhappily, terminated with his life. For after the deceaſe of this pontiff, the Franciſcan war broke out afreſh. Nor was there a period ſince the firſt introduction of the ſchiſm, when the intereſts of the two adverſe bodies, the Spirituals and the Brethren of the Community, were ſo warmly upheld. It is truly horrifying to contemplate the dire calamities which followed. So revolting are they to the beſt feelings of human nature, that we would be diſpoſed to queſtion their reality, did not the indubitable teſtimony of hiſtory place them upon record as facts which cannot be diſputed.

Although papal authority and influence

* Boulay. Hiſt. Acad. Paris. tom. iv. p. 152. Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 567. (Soames.)

were vigorouſly employed to quench the flame of diſſenſion among the two generic ſections of this order, it but burned the brighter, and blazed forth with increaſed ſtrength and fury, in proportion to the efforts made to ſuppreſs it. At length an opportunity was afforded for giving vent to a rancour long-cheriſhed and deep-rooted, and for exhibiting it in all its fiendiſh aſperity. After a well concocted conſpiracy, one hundred and twenty of the Spirituals ſuddenly came down upon, and moſt violently attacked the Brethren of the Community in their convents at Narbonne and Beziers, and having expelled them from their habitations by force of arms, they elected new preſiding officers, caſt off their well-made garments, and aſſumed thoſe that were ſhort, narrow, and ill-ſhaped, as being more conſiſtent with the rule of their founder.*

So outrageous an occurrence compelled John XXII., who was Clement's ſucceſſor, to iſſue a brief, thereby to preſerve the public peace; as from the fact of the citizens of Narbonne favouring the Spirituals, the pro-

* A. D. 1314. Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 668. (Soames.)

bable reſult would be riot, confuſion, and diſorder. At length this pope ſucceeded in aboliſhing ſome of the leſſer diſtinctions of the order; and after adviſing the king of Sicily to expel from his dominions the Spirituals, who reſorted thither for ſelf-defence, he commanded the French Spirituals to attend a council to be held at Avignon, and required that they ſhould lay aſide their ſhort, ſtraight habits, with the ſmall hoods.

The papal injunction was univerſally acquieſced in, with the exception of twenty-four brethren, and their leader, Francis Bernard Delitioſi, who fanatically aſſerted, that the goſpel of Chriſt was not more ſacred, or more to be obeyed, than the rules of St. Francis; that the pontiffs who permitted the order to erect ſtore-houſes and granaries, had ſinned moſt grievouſly; and that requiring a change of dreſs different from that preſcribed by the founder, added fearfully to their weight of guilt! Hereupon, pope John, becoming exaſperated to the higheſt degree, anathematized theſe diſſentients, and ordered that they ſhould be puniſhed as heretics. Accordingly Delitioſi was apprehended, but ultimately died in confinement; while four of his followers were condemned to be burnt

at Marſeilles.* Theſe circumſtances occaſioned a revival of malignity againſt the pope and his abettors, by the Spirituals, who denounced John XXII. as "Antichriſt," and the "Man of Sin," and maintained that he ſhould be depoſed for having "ſhed the blood of the ſaints."

Such an aſpect of affairs could not long continue without a change, as each party was ſtriving for ſupremacy. For either the Spirituals muſt be the rulers, or the Roman pontiff's decrees muſt be obeyed. The pope, therefore, perceiving that his authority was diſregarded by theſe obſtinate and tenacious monks, and being highly offended that the term "Antichriſt" was applied to him —however deſerving of the appellation†—

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* A.D. 1318. Argentre, Collectio Judicior de novis error. tom. i. p. 294.

† Pope Gregory the Great (about the year 594), in one of his letters to John Biſhop of Conſtantinople, ſaid:— "*Quiſquis ſe univerſalem Sacerdotem vocat in elatione ſua Antichriſtum præcurrit.*" "Whoever in his pride calls himſelf univerſal prieſt, is Antichriſt's harbinger." Yet in a few years after (A.D. 606), his own ſucceſſor aſſumes this very title, under the name of Boniface III., by the aid of the Emperor Phocas. Cardinal Baronius thus mentions the fact: "Phocas iratus Ciraco Epiſcopo Conſtantinopolitano adjudicavit titulum *Œcumenici Pontifici* Romano ſoli."—

delivered them over to the tender mercies of their moſt obdurate enemies, the Dominicans, who were ſpecially authorized and empowered to apprehend them wherever they may be found. Theſe "indefatigable ſoldiers," we need ſcarcely inform the reader, executed the papal command with promptitude and rigour. Accordingly, ſeveral hundreds of the devoted Franciſcans were condemned to the ſtake in France, Italy, Spain, and Germany.

The Spirituals became again arouſed in conſequence of the martyrdom of their brethren; and having ſecured the patronage of Lewis of Bavaria, who greatly aſſiſted the promotion of their deſigns, they ſucceeded, by repeated intrigues, in perſecuting the

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(Bar. ad A. D. 606.) "Phocas being incenſed againſt Ciriacus, biſhop of Conſtantinople, who had aſſumed the title, granted the title, *Sovereign Pontiff*, to the Roman Biſhop." Roger Hoveden writes: "That Abbot Johachim, in converſing with Richard I. of England, and Philip II. of France, on Antichriſt, ſaid: '*Quod jam natus eſt in Civitate Romana et in Sæde Apoſtolica Sublimabitur.*' 'That already he was in Rome, and ſhould be lifted up to the apoſtolical chair.'" (Hoved. Annal. Poſt. in Rich. I. p. 681.) And St. Bernard ſaid, "That the popes were not the miniſters of Chriſt, and that the *Apocalyptic beaſt* occupied the chair of St. Peter." (*Uſſer. de Chriſt. Eccl. Sur. et Stat.* c. vii. ſecs. 5 & 6.)

Dominicans, and depriving John XXII. of the popedom. After the death of this pontiff, ſucceeding popes endeavoured to reconcile theſe two hoſtile factions; but neither edicts, bulls, nor inquiſitorial puniſhments, could effect the deſired union. At length, after much entreaty, a diviſion of the order into two bodies was unanimouſly agreed upon. The one was denominated the Conventual Brethren, and the other, the Brethren of the Obſervation. Thus, as has been ably remarked, "unity being the boaſted palladium of the Romiſt Church, it is neceſſary that ſhe ſhould ſee how weak is her battle ſteed, her invulnerable Achilles."

Francis was regarded by his order as a ſecond Chriſt, and in every reſpect equal to the Divine founder of the church. Theſe opinions were promulgated in a work, entitled, "The Golden Book of the Conformities of the Holy Father St. Francis, with the Life of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt;" written in 1383, by Bartholomew Albizi, a Franciſcan monk, of Piſa.* Therein the author

* Lib. aureus, inſcrip. lib. conform. vite beati ac ſeraphici patris Franciſci ad vitam Jeſu Chriſti Domini noſtri, correctus et illuſtrat. Bononiæ, 1590.—*Nouveau Dictionnaire Hiſt. Crit.* tom. i. *apud* art. *Albizi.* p. 217.

ſalutes Francis with a prayer, ſuch as is cuſtomarily addreſſed to the Redeemer; firſt, preſumptuouſly calling him "typical Jeſus," and then beſeeching him to cure the ſins, to heal the ſpiritual maladies of ſouls, and finally to give unto them a place in the kingdom of heaven.* He alſo enumerates forty points of reſemblance between Chriſt and St. Francis, in which the marks of wounds on his perſon are included; but theſe were multiplied in 1651, in a work written by a Spaniſh monk, to four thouſand! Even Pierre d'Olive, a native of Serignan, in Languedoc, who had acquired a ſhining reputation for his learning, ſanctity, and writings, and who ſharply and openly cenſured the corruption of the church of Rome, in his "Poſtilla," partook ſo much of the extravagances of the age in which he lived, as to believe that Francis was wholly and entirely transformed into the perſon of Chriſt!† The bones of this weak enthuſiaſt

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* Franciſce Jeſu typice dux formaq.; minorum, per te Chriſti mirificè ſunt geſta, et donor. Mala pater egregie propelle animorum ſedis nobis perpetuas da regni ſupernorum.—*Nouv. Dict. Hiſt. Chriſt.*

† Totum Chriſto configuratum.—*Litera Magiſtrorum de Poſtilla Fratris P. Joh. Olivi*, in Baluzii *Miſcel.* tom. i. p. 213.

were raiſed by order of John XXII., and publicly burnt with his writings, in 1325.*

I cannot more fitly cloſe the preſent ſubject, than by referring the reader to what a reformed Romiſt prieſt writes reſpecting theſe mendicant monks. He obſerves, that their "auſterity, mortification, and holineſs were merely exterior; for the coarſe, dirty, diſguſting habit and cowl of the filthy Franciſcan, ſerved to cover an indulged and well-pampered body. And theſe worthies were accuſtomed to riot, and 'drown dull care' in their jovial convents as well as the lord of the ſoil, or the pope himſelf. As to piety or edification, their cloiſters exhibited quite the contrary. They were generally ſcenes of licentiouſneſs, contention, mutual jealouſy, bickering and diſorder. And even at this day there is ſcarcely to be found a ſingle man of ſpirit or talent in the community of theſe ſtupid, ignorant, worthleſs, over-bearing drones."† This ſevere and cutting rebuke is not ill-beſtowed, judging from my own perſonal knowledge of members of the Franciſcan fraternity.

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* Raynald, ad. An. 1325, ſect. xx.

† Papal Impoſitions and Monaſtic Intrigue portrayed, by the Rev. M. Brenan.

CHAPTER VI.

Legendary Writings.

"The Greeks led the way in committing to writing whatever reports were in circulation among the vulgar in regard to more ancient times, without diſcrimination; and hence originated thoſe medleys of fables, which the Latins afterwards ſo greedily caught up and retained."—MOSHEIM.

SAINT Chryſoſtom obſerves that, "a fine lie is a fine thing!" a principle which, if not ſtrictly correct in morals, has nevertheleſs been very generally adopted by Metaphraſtes, Bollandus, and contemporary writers of the ſame theological ſchool. One great object in view was to uphold and extend the popularity of the ſeveral religious orders. And how could this have been better or more ſucceſsfully accompliſhed, than by publiſhing fictitious biographies of ſome of the fraternity, and therein recording the dubious auſterity of their lives and the numerous

miracles they had performed? The multitude were but too eager to receive, and too willing to accredit, all that intereſted parties had averred concerning Brother Bonaventura or Father Paul: and no matter how looſely or irreligiouſly they may have lived, they were ſure after death to be lauded as patterns of the ſevereſt virtue and the moſt eminent ſanctity. This pious fraud was partly occaſioned in conſequence of premiums being offered to thoſe who, upon the deceaſe of a brother, ſhould produce the moſt elaborate and exaggerated hiſtory of the holy life he led, and the extraordinary wonders he effected. Hence monkiſh biographers ſet no bounds either to the fervour of their deſcription or their violation of truth. And as one order vied with the other in ſeeking the popular apotheoſis, ſo they laboured to rival each other in the number and holineſs of their ſainted brethren. The conſequence is, that in the whole *Acta Sanctorum* ſcarce one individual is recorded who did not belong to ſome religious fraternity. The abſurdities related of theſe ſaints baffle all deſcription. Only imagine our being informed of St. Benedict, that his mill, when he went from it to his devotions, would turn of its own accord;

and that when a monk inquiſitively peeped through a crevice to view the miracle, he was immediately ſtruck blind for his preſumption! * Superſtition and ignorance ſo obtained that there was a kind of neceſſity, ſo to ſpeak, for ſuch legendary tales; as no ſaint could be eſtimated by the common people, if his life was not read, or elſe miracles recorded of him.† The monks, from ſelf-intereſted motives, adminiſtered to the popular taſte, however perverted; and of which they themſelves had been the main creators. Sometimes theſe godly men would perform dexterous and cunning feats which, to the inexperienced obſerver, appeared miraculous. But they were ſimply effected by natural phenomena. For example, Mandubnauc, an Iriſh monk, of Roſevalley, carried off the bees of that place to Ireland, on board the ſhip in which he embarked; but, of courſe, this plauſible miracle was accompliſhed by ſecreting the queen bee.‡ When impoſitions were really practiſed the deceivers did not always eſcape re-

* Mabillon's *Acta Sanctor.* Ord. Bened. tom. iii. p. 195.
† Script. p. Bed. 168 b.
‡ Ang. Sacr. ii. 636.

tribution, however ſucceſsfully they may have eluded detection. Perat relates, that there was a miraculous fountain at Moiſſac, to which numerous lepers came to bathe, and they were reſtored to health by the efficacy of ſome ſaint whoſe relics were depoſited in the abbey. Unfortunately, the monks had the diſeaſe communicated to them by the lepers, and a great many died, ſo that they had to ſhut up the fountain for their repoſe and health!*

"Alas, what follies," ſays Eraſmus, commenting on the abuſes which crept into the church, "follies at which even I myſelf can ſcarcely help bluſhing! Do we not ſee each country laying claim to its particular demi-god? Each miſery has its ſaint and its candle. This one relieves you in tooth-ache; that one gives aſſiſtance at child-birth; a third reſtores your ſtolen goods; a fourth ſaves you in ſhipwreck; and a fifth keeps watch over your flocks. Some of theſe are all-powerful in many things at once. This is particularly the caſe with the Virgin, the mother of God, to whom the vulgar attribute almoſt more than to her Son. In

* Chronique notices, et ſupr. vii. 12.

the midſt of all theſe follies, if ſome odious ſage ariſe, and, giving a counter note, exclaim, (as in truth he may,) 'You will not periſh miſerably if you live as chriſtians. You will redeem your ſins, if to the money which you give you add hatred of the ſins themſelves, tears, vigils, prayers, faſtings, and a thorough change in your mode of life. Yon ſaint will befriend you if you imitate his life.' If ſome ſage, I ſay, charitably duns ſuch words into their ears, Oh! of what felicity does he not deprive their ſouls, and into what trouble, what deſpondency, does he not plunge them! The mind of man is ſo conſtituted, that impoſture has a much ſtronger hold upon it than truth. If there is any ſaint more fabulous than another, for inſtance, a St. George, a St. Chriſtopher, or a St. Barbara, you will ſee them adored with much greater devotion than St. Peter, St. Paul, or Chriſt himſelf."*

The poiſon ſo inſidiouſly inſtilled into the minds of the credulous devotees of the Romiſt church, under pretence of adminiſtering to them edifying and pious inſtruction, may be extracted from the following ſelect flowers, culled from the garden of ſcholaſtic theology :—

* Eccomium Moriæ, op. iv. pp. 444—450.

In the "Conſtitutions" of the abbot Benedict we read: that after ſupper the brethren were to aſſemble, and ſome one of them was to read aloud from the Collations of Caſſian, or the Lives of the Fathers, or ſome other edifying book, but not the Pentateuch, nor the other books of the Old Teſtament; as this famous man was of opinion that it would not be profitable for perſons of ordinary underſtanding to hear them.* Such a mode of infuſing into weak minds her deleterious teaching, is quite in character with a church that will not bear the light, nor allow her doctrines to be brought to the bar of Scripture or reaſon. She opens wide to the enthuſiaſtic gaze of her votaries the productions of heated imaginations and fertile fancies, replete with all kinds of deluſive vanities and

* Mais pourquoi défendre la lecture de ces livres avant complenes? C'eſt apparemment parce qu'il s'y rencontre certaines hiſtoires qui peuvent laiſſer dans l'eſprit des impreſſions qui pourroient revenir et inquieter les Religieux pendant le ſommeil. Peut-être, auſſi parce que ces hiſtoires des guerres de Joſué, des Juges, et des Rois frappent trop vivement l'imagination, et remuent trop les paſſions. C'eſt, dit on, pour cette dernière raiſon, qu' Ulphilas, Evêque des Goths, ne voulut pas traduire en ſa langue les Livres des Rois, de peur d'allumer de plus en plus la paſſion de ces peuples, qui n'étoit déjà que trop grande pour la guerre.—*Calmet.*

dangerous deceits, and cloſes on them the word of God; and uttering an anathema, from which there lies no appeal, againſt all who would preſume to open its illuminated pages, or judge of its contents, ſhe ſeals it up for ever from their view;* aſſerting, that it is dark and obſcure, and unprofitable for the people.†

As another ſpecimen of legendary literature, I inſert a curious ſtory from the writings of a diſtinguiſhed modern prelate and ſaint:—"It is related, that Jane, the venerable ſiſter of Jeſus and Mary, of the order of St. Francis, while ſhe was on one occaſion meditating on the infant Jeſus perſecuted by Herod, heard a loud noiſe, as if ſome one were purſued by armed ſoldiers. A moſt beautiful infant, overwhelmed with affliction, and flying from his

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* Prohibemus etiam, ne libros Veteris Teſtamenti aut Novi, laici permittantur habere; niſi forte pſalterium, vel breviarium pro diviniis officiis, aut horas beatæ Mariæ, aliquis ex devotione habere velit. Sed ne præmiſſos libros habeant in vulgari tranſlatos, arctiſſimè inhibemus.—*Concil. Toloſan. P. Gregory IX.* an. ch. 1229. *Phil. Labbæi et Gab. Coſſartii*, tom. xi. pars. 1. *Lutetiæ Pariſiorum*, 1671.

† Conc. Trid. Seſs. iv. Decret. de Can. Scrip. Bellar. de verbo Dei, lib. iv. cap. 3. Ind. libr. prohibit. Regula iv.

enemies, inſtantly appeared, and ſaid to her, 'My dear ſiſter Jane, aſſiſt and ſave me! I am Jeſus of Nazareth, and am flying away from ſinners who ſeek to take away my life, and perſecute me with more cruelty than Herod did. Do you ſave me!'"*

The following circumſtance is recorded of St. Philip Nerius, founder of the Congregation of Prieſts:—"About the year 1555, when Philip, who had many followers, journeyed to the place where are the baths of Diocletian, he ſaw ſtanding upon a wall, which had fallen down from age, the devil, in the form of a man; and when he obſerved him more cloſely, he beheld him at one time appear as a youth, and preſently afterwards as an old man. Hence diſcovering the tricks of the devil, he ordered him in the name of Chriſt to reveal himſelf. Overcome by this, the evil one betook himſelf to flight; and as he departed he filled the place with ſo offenſive a ſmell, that even the beaſts could not tolerate it, and thus made it evident to Philip and the other ſpectators who he was."†

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* Ap. P. Genov. Dol. di Maria.—Liguori's Dis. p. 153.

† Acta Sanctorum Maii., tom. vi. Antverpiæ, 1688. Die Vigeſima Sexta Maii.

In the "Life of St. Andrew Salus," we are preſented with a ſtill more ludicrous treat:—"When it was dark, and Andrew, who was watching about the middle of the night, ſecretly offered up in the ſanctuary of his heart prayers and vows to God and the bleſſed martyr, a devil ſuddenly came to him, ſurrounded with many other devils, and bearing in his hand an axe; whilſt of the other devils ſome were furniſhed with daggers, others with clubs, ſome with ſwords and lances, others with ropes, and all fought under that dragon or ſerpent who was the commander, about whom they frequently aſſembled to the diſmay of the bleſſed Andrew. Attended, therefore, with theſe companions, and raiſing a loud ſhout, that moſt wicked devil, who aſſumed the form of an Æthiop, ruſhed upon the ſaint with great fury, as if about to ſtrike him with the axe which he held in his hand. But the bleſſed youth, raiſing his hands to the Lord, with many tears, preferred the following petition, '*Sancte Joannes theologe, opitulare mihi!*' 'O holy John, the theologian, ſuccour me!' Immediately it thundered on high, and there were voices, as if proceeding from a crowd. And behold an old man appeared, remarkable by the great-

neſs of his body and eyes, and rather bald, with his face ſhining above the ſun, ſurrounded with a great multitude, to whom he ſaid in an angry tone, 'ſhut the doors, for no one ſhall eſcape from our hands.' And all the Moors being thus ſhut in, one of them whiſpered in the ear of his companions, '*Væ nobis, quia Joannes ille, ut vehemens imprimis eſt, graviſſima nobis, tormenta infliget.*' 'Woe to us, for that John, who is a moſt violent fellow, will inflict upon us the moſt acute torments.' But that venerable old man, when at his command his companions had taken off the chain from the bleſſed Andrew's neck, and had given it to him, going to the outer door, ſtood there, and ordered them to bring to him the Moors, one by one. Then he ordered the firſt to be extended on the ground, and he tripled the bleſſed Andrew's chain, and thus inflicted nearly one hundred blows upon the wretch, who cried out, after the faſhion of a man, 'Mercy, mercy, mercy!' When he had done this, he ordered another to be extended, who was treated preciſely in the ſame manner. Meanwhile the bleſſed Andrew, when he heard this pitiable cry for mercy, could not help laughing! But when they were diſmiſſed thus beaten, the com-

panions of John cried out ſaying to each of them, ‘ Depart and tell thoſe things, if you will, to your father Satan.’”*

“ In the ‘ Ciſtercian Chronicles’ it is related that, in paſſing through a wood, a monk of Brabente, who was travelling on Chriſtmas-night, heard a noiſe which reſembled the groans of a new-born infant. He went to the place from whence the cries proceeded, and ſaw a beautiful babe in the midſt of the ſnow, trembling with cold and bathed in tears. Touched with pity, the religious inſtantly diſmounted, and approaching the infant, ſaid: ‘ O, my child! why are you ſo abandoned in this ſnow, to weep and die?’ The infant anſwered: ‘ Alas! how can I but weep when I ſee myſelf ſo deſerted by all, and find that no one receives, or takes compaſſion on me?’ After theſe words the infant diſappeared, giving the religious to underſtand, that by this viſion he wiſhed to reprove the ingratitude of men, who, while they ſee him born in a cave for their ſake, leave him to weep without pity for his ſufferings.”†

I have now to direct the reader’s attention

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* Collarium ad Diem 28. Maii. Vita S. Andreæ Sali.

† St. Liguori’s Dis. and Med. trans. from the Italian.

to a remarkable incident in the life of the abbeſs St. Thereſa, a Spaniſh lady of noble birth, as recorded by herſelf. In her autobiography, a work ſtamped with the high approval of the College of Cenſors, ſhe ſtates, that on one occaſion, while performing her wonted devotions, ſhe was, by ſome ſupernatural agency ſuddenly thruſt into hell, the entrance to which ſhe deſcribes as reſembling that of an oven. She continues her ſtrange narrative in a mingled ſtrain of the melancholy and the ridiculous; and concludes by affirming, that ſhe poſitively laboured under no deluſion, but was really in the dark priſon of Hades, and that during her detention ſhe endured ſuch excruciating agony, as no human language could deſcribe, or mortal tongue utter. After the liberation of this ſainted heroine from the regions of deſpair, ſeveral phyſicians who examined her perſon, gave their teſtimony to the peculiar phyſiological change which was wrought on her body, by means of ſome unknown torture. Much doubt, however, prevailed at the time, as to the certainty of Thereſa's ſtatements. However, all incredulity became finally removed; and biſhops, cardinals, and popes, received the entire tale, as a truth worthy of being

accredited. And to complete the farce, the deluded ſubject of this famous impoſture was actually canonized and declared a ſaint!

The "Life of St. Thereſa, written by herſelf," from which I have gleaned the preceding myth, is a production of high repute, although, ſtrange to ſay, but few copies are extant in this country; the cauſe of which is ſufficiently obvious not to require explanation. I well remember that when a novice I was prohibited from peruſing this book, notwithſtanding my ardent deſire to be enriched by its lore; poſſibly, as thoſe who had the reſponſibility of my training conſidered that, at ſo early a ſtage of my noviciate, it would be productive of evil rather than good for me to ſcan its pages or learn its contents. Thus my acquaintance with Thereſa's life was reſerved for a more remote period, when I ſhould become fully indoctrinated into all the abſurdities, myſteries, myſticiſms, and deceits of my profeſſion.

I ſhall now furniſh the reader with a narrative of an eſtatica, the ſubject of which was St. Rita, of Roccha Porrenna Caſſia, in Umbria, a nun of the Auguſtinian order. The account is taken from the Roman Breviary; a conſiderable portion of which

monks and prieſts are obliged, under pain of incurring the ſevereſt cenſures of the church, to recite daily for their ſpiritual edification and inſtruction :—

"On a certain day, whilſt the ſaint was more earneſtly praying to the image of Chriſt hanging from the croſs, a thorn from the crown of the crucifix was ſo ſtruck through her forehead, that ſhe ſuffered an incurable wound till her death; from which, in addition to her keeneſt ſenſe of pain, a foul corruption iſſued. From whence, leſt it ſhould excite diſguſt in the ſiſters, ſhe lived a recluſe with God. But in the ſecular year, being forbidden by Antiſtita to go to Rome with the other ſiſters on account of the deformity of the ulcer, ſhe grew well on a ſudden upon wiping the wound, which however on her return home broke out again. After ſome time, being attacked with heavy ſickneſs, ſhe bore it moſt patiently for four years, at which time a blooming roſe from a ſmall garden, in a very rough winter, and two very freſh figs were brought to her. Now being near her death, ſhe heard Chriſt the Lord, together with the bleſſed Virgin, calling her to the kingdom of heaven. And ſo, having received all the ſacraments of the

church, ſhe ſlept in the Lord, on the eleventh of the kalends of June, in the year after the birth of Chriſt, 1443. Her body, to this day uncorrupted, fragrant with the ſweeteſt odour, is piouſly worſhipped. Urban VIII. added her to the number of the ſaints, conſpicuous by her miracles before and after her death."*

The following amuſing anecdote of a ſatanic apparition being vanquiſhed by the abbot, St. Walthen, is quoted from the *Acta Sanctorum* :—

"When upon a certain occaſion St. Walthen ſtood praying before the great altar, with his eyes and hands raiſed to heaven, the evil ſpirit transfigured himſelf into many ſhapes. He firſt ran about the pavement in the form of a mouſe, playing many antics; afterwards in the ſhape of a grunting pig; afterwards in the form of a black dog, barking; afterwards of a howling wolf; and laſtly, of a roaring, long-horned bull. But the ſaint cauſed all theſe illuſory forms to vaniſh, by making the ſign of the croſs. At laſt, that ſpirit, who has a thouſand artifices, and who in a thouſand ways endeavours to

* Rom. Brev. Vern. Par. p. 735. Ed. Liſb. 1786.

diſturb quiet hearts, exhibited himſelf in the form of a great ſoldier in armour, ſitting upon the back of a horrible horſe with a whale's hide, which emitted fire and ſmoke from its noſtrils and mouth, and ſhook his lance againſt the man who was praying. The ſaint jumping up as faſt as he could by the impulſe of the Spirit, and going to the altar, reverentially took up the ivory pix,* which contained the holy body of the Lord, and ſigning himſelf with it, and running like a ſecond David againſt the infernal Goliath, and inventing a new name for him, under the dictation of the Spirit, ſaid :—'Behold, O execrable mouſe, O terrible ſoldier, thou ſatellite of Satan, thy Judge is about to ſend thee into hell : wait for him if thou dareſt !' Overcome by this ſpeech, the infernal horſeman diſappeared." †

We are likewiſe informed that, on one occaſion, when St. Dominic was "ſitting at a window with many of his brethren, and was preaching to the ſiſterhood, the enemy of mankind, in the likeneſs of a ſparrow,

* The veſſel wherein the conſecrated wafer is tabernacled.

† Acta Sanctorum. Vita S. Waltheni Abbatis. Dei Tertia Auguſti, tom. i. p. 264.

flying over the ſiſters in the air, but ſo near the ground that you might lay hold of him, interrupted the preaching, which when the ſaint perceived, he ſaid to ſiſter Maximilla, 'Riſe and lay hold of him, and bring him to me.' She riſing took him without any difficulty, and gave him through the window to the holy man. But he began haſtily to pluck his feathers off, ſaying, 'O thou enemy! O thou enemy!' And when he had plucked all his feathers off, the devil meanwhile crying out lamentably, and all thoſe preſent laughing at him, Dominic caſt him out, ſaying, 'Depart, thou enemy of the human race, fly now, if thou canſt!'

"It happened there alſo, that this man of God, who had watched till the middle of the night in prayer, departing from the church, wrote by candlelight, ſitting at the head of his dormitory. And behold the devil appearing in the form of a monkey, began ſtrutting about before him, making ridiculous geſtures with grimaces. Then the ſaint beckoned to him to ſtand ſtill, giving him a lighted candle to hold before him; and he, although he held it, continued to make his grimaces. Meanwhile the candle was finiſhed, and began to burn the monkey's fingers,

and he began to lament as if tortured by the flame, whereas he who burns in the flames of hell ought not to fear a bodily flame. But the ſaint beckoned him to ſtand ſtill. Why ſhould I ſay more? He ſtood there until the whole of his forefinger was burnt down to the ſocket, crying out more and more loudly from the torture. Thus the man of God, ſtrong in faith, having taken him in who ſought to impoſe upon him, gave him a ſharp blow with a cane, which he always carried with him, ſaying, 'Depart, thou wicked man;' and the blow ſounded as if he had ſtruck a dry bladder full of wind. Upon this, caſting himſelf againſt the neareſt wall, he diſappeared, leaving behind him an ill odour, which diſcovered who he was. Siſter Cæcilia, a girl aged ſeventeen, firſt received the habit of the order from the hand of the holy father Dominic. She beheld with her eyes, and heard with her ears, and faithfully narrated the things which are related."*

The following legend is told by Mervin Archdall, on the authority of Joceline:—

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* Acta Ampliora S. Dominici Confeſſoris. Die quartâ Auguſti. c. xiii.

" St. Patrick had a ſtaff covered with gold, and ſet with precious ſtones, called the ſtaff of Jeſus. The hiſtory of this celebrated ſtaff, is briefly this: St. Patrick, moved by divine inſtinct or angelic revelation, viſited one Juſtus, an aſcetic who inhabited an iſland in the Tyrrhene Sea (part of the Mediterranean Sea on the Tuſcan coaſt), a man of exemplary virtue and moſt holy life. After mutual ſalutations and diſcourſe, he preſented the Iriſh apoſtle with a ſtaff, which he averred he had received from the hands of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf. In this iſland were ſome men in the bloom of youth, and others who appeared aged and decrepit. St. Patrick converſing with them, found that thoſe aged perſons were ſons of thoſe ſeemingly young. Aſtoniſhed at this miraculous appearance, he was told, that from their infancy they had ſerved God, that they were continually employed in works of charity, and their doors ever open to the traveller and diſtreſſed; that one night a ſtranger, with a ſtaff in his hand, came to them, whom they accommodated to the beſt of their power; that in the morning he bleſſed them, and ſaid, 'I am Jeſus Chriſt whom you have always faithfully ſerved, but laſt night you received me

in my proper perſon:' he then gave his ſtaff to their ſpiritual father, with directions to deliver it to a ſtranger, named Patrick, who would ſhortly viſit them; on ſaying this he aſcended into heaven, and left us in that ſtate of juvenility in which you behold us, and our ſons, then young, are the old decrepit perſons you now ſee. Joceline goes on to relate that with this ſtaff our apoſtle collected every venomous creature in the iſland to the top of the mountain of Cruagh Phadring, in the county of Mayo, and from thence, precipitated them into the ocean." *

We are informed by an hiſtorian of no mean ſtanding, that after the deceaſe of Thomas à Becket, the arrogant and diſaffected archbiſhop of Canterbury, "it pleaſed the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to irradiate his glorious martyr with many miracles, that it might appear to all the world he had obtained a victory ſuitable to his merits. None who approached his ſepulchre in faith returned without a cure. For ſtrength was reſtored to the lame, hearing to the deaf, ſight to the blind, ſpeech to the dumb, health to lepers, and life to the dead. Nay, not only men

* Monaſticon Hibernicum, p. 150.

and women, but even birds and beaſts, were raiſed from death to life."* It is likewiſe aſſerted, that, on being expoſed to view in the church before his ſepulture, he aroſe out of his coffin, and lighted the wax tapers which were on the altar; and that after the "*requiem*" was chanted for the repoſe of his ſoul, he held up his hand to bleſs the aſſembly. Although fifty years after the death of Becket it was the ſubject of a public diſpute at the Univerſity of Paris, whether he was in heaven or in hell—ſo ambiguous a point was his ſanctity: ſome aſſerting that for his extreme pride he deſerved to be damned —yet we find that in the year 1420, not fewer than fifty thouſand foreigners, of all ages and ſexes, made a pilgrimage to his renowned ſhrine, which was enriched with a prodigious quantity of precious gems. One of immenſe value, ſuppoſed to be the moſt ſplendid in Europe, was offered at his tomb by Louis VII. of France, when he made a pilgrimage thereto.†

I have juſt laid before the reader a ſpeci-

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* Matt. Par. p. 87.

† Rapin's Hiſt. Engl. vol. i. p. 232 (fol. ed.) Burnet's Hiſt. Reform. book iii.

men of monkiſh legendary writings, ſelected for the moſt part, from a work bearing the ſacred impreſs of the Vatican, namely, Mabillon's *Acta Sanctorum*—that moſt prepoſterous of all apocryphal compilations! It requires no comment whatever to aſcertain the inevitable tendency of ſuch a production as that from which I quote; although upon the teſtimony of Alban Butler, the famous compiler thereof, "whether we conſult reaſon, authority, or experience, we may boldly affirm, that except the ſacred writings no book has reclaimed ſo many ſinners, or formed ſo many holy men to virtue as that of the Lives of the Saints!"* But this gratuitous aſſertion muſt aſſuredly be alſo regarded as apocryphal. He moreover ſtates, on the teſtimony of St. Auſtin, "that two courtiers were moved on the ſpot to forſake the world and become fervent monks, by accidentally reading the life of St. Anthony; that St. John Columbin, from a rich, covetous, and paſſionate nobleman, was changed into a ſaint, by caſually peruſing the life of St. Mary of Egypt; that a Marſhal of France owed his converſion to the reading of the

* Preface to the Lives of the Saints.

life of St. Francis Borgia; and that Dr. Palafax, biſhop of Oſma, in his preface to the fourth tome of the letters of St. Thereſa, relates, "that an eminent Lutheran miniſter at Bremen, famous for ſeveral books which he had publiſhed againſt the Catholic church, purchaſed the autobiography of that ſaint, with a view of attempting to confute it; but by attentively reading it over, was converted to the Catholic faith!"

"O for deluſion. O for error ſtill!"

That prepotency which Alban Butler claims for the biography of Romiſt ſaints, a modern French divine demands for cloiſtral eſtabliſhments. Employing vain taunts with reference to Proteſtant England, he boaſtingly exclaims:—"Your Univerſities and Societies of the learned have produced a number of men of rare merit and extenſive genius—the Newtons, the Lockes, the Addiſons, the Clarkes, the Sherlocks, the Louths, the Lardners, the Kennicots, the Paleys, the Broughams, etc. But is it not worthy of remark, that theſe Proteſtant ſchools of learning never produced a John of Matha,—a Peter of Nolaſco,—a Bernard of Menthon,—a Peter of Betancourt,—or a

Vincent of Paula?"* This enthuſiaſtic abbé certainly ſhould have completed the noble phalanx by adding—an Anthony of Coba,—a Mecarius of Alexandria,—a Simeon Stylites,—and a Francis of Aſſiſi! However, the wonder is that in ſober-minded, practical England, a party ſhould be found ſo bedazzled and bedizzened as to look for piety from ſo corrupt and corrupting a ſource. But there is no accounting for ſuch idioſyncracy of religious taſte. For our own part we do not envy its poſſeſſors. "'Tis pitiful; 'tis wondrous pitiful!" But, perhaps, like other deluſions, this too may be ſhort-lived, and "like the baſeleſs fabric of a viſion, leave not a wreck behind."

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* *Vide* Nuns and Monaſtic Inſtitutes, publiſhed by the Catholic Inſtitute of Great Britain—a corporation for ſome years defunct.

CHAPTER VII.

The principal Monaſtic Orders exiſting in Great Britain and Ireland—The Vows and Internal Diſcipline of the "Religious."

"The Court of Rome had a leading ſelf-intereſted object in every one of its inſtitutions, of which that of monaſtic orders was not the leaſt powerful or conſpicuous. Not a prince in Europe has ſuch a regularly conſtituted body of *Gens d'armes* as has the pope in theſe ſeveral orders; all devoted to his cauſe, and obliged by their *vows* to maintain his arrogant power and authority."—Rev. M. Brenan.

TO enter upon an account of the numerous monaſtic orders—"black, white, and grey, with all their trumpery"—eſtabliſhed in this and the ſiſter country, would exceed our intended limits as well as prove unintereſting to the general reader. Hence, let it ſuffice to draw attention to, and remark upon, a few of the moſt prominent, popular, and powerful.

The Ciſtercian order, of which there is a flouriſhing eſtabliſhment at Mount Mellary, in Ireland, and another at Charnwood Foreſt, Leiceſterſhire, was originally founded towards the cloſe of the XIth century, by Robert, abbot of Moleſme, in Burgundy, a province of France, who being utterly unable to revive the decaying and diſſolute ſpirit and diſcipline of his monaſtery, retired, with about twenty of the monks, to Citeaux (Ciſtercium), in the dioceſs of Chalons,—at that time a wild and barren wilderneſs,—where he and his aſſociates obſerved the rules of St. Benedict with ſcrupulous exactneſs and rigour. This order progreſſed in ſo wonderful a manner, that during the following century it was propagated throughout ſeveral parts of Europe. So great indeed was the fame of its members, that they not only received the moſt coſtly and munificent preſents and endowments, but were actually aſſigned the privileges of a ſpiritual republic; and, in civil as well as eccleſiaſtical matters, acquired a governing power over every kingdom within the precincts of which they had eſtabliſhed themſelves. The progreſs of this order exceeded that of all other monaſtic inſtitutes. And in leſs than a century after its foundation

it boaſted of nearly two thouſand religious houſes.*

Thoſe members of the Ciſtercian order, who planted themſelves in Ireland, were, ſeveral years ago, driven from France, having previouſly endured impriſonment, and ſuffered many and ſevere privations. Landing on the ſhores of hoſpitable Ireland—whoſe inhabitants are proverbial for a readineſs to ſhelter the children of misfortune, and to ſuccour the oppreſſed and deſtitute—they ſpeedily gained the affections, and found an aſylum in the homes, of the humble peaſantry, who ſympathiſed with theſe exiles, more eſpecially as being members of a common faith. Shortly after their arrival, the wandering monaſtics, headed by their ſuperior the Right Rev. Dr. Ryan, fixed their habitation on a wild and mountainous part of a ſouthern diſtrict, where they laboured under numerous diſadvantages, and felt the bad effects of a moiſt and humid atmoſphere, ſo different from the continental climate. Several of the monks were ſubſequently diſperſed through-

* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 357. (Soames.) Mabillon's Annales Benedictines, vols. v. and vi. Pier le Nain's Eſſai de l'Hiſtoire de l'Ordre des Citeaux. Paris: 1696.

out England and the ſiſter iſle, with the view of collecting funds for the erection of a monaſtery, which would exceed in ſplendour any other edifice dedicated to cloiſtered purpoſes. Having by this means realiſed a ſufficient ſum, a ſplendid monument of monaſticiſm was raiſed at Mount Mellary, in the county of Waterford, where the brotherhood now reſide under the preſidency of a mitred abbot.* Sir Richard Keane, the lord of the

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* An election of an abbot took place on Thurſday, January 29th, 1846. The biſhop preſided as legate of the Holy See; Very Rev. Dr. Burke, notary, and the Very Rev. Drs. O'Brien, Fogarty, and Hally, witneſſes, as required by the conſtitutions of the order. The moſt ſtrict and ſevere caution was obſerved on the part of thoſe voting and thoſe that received the votes.

At the cloſe of the ſcrutiny, the announcement was made to the anxiouſly awaiting brothers, that Father Mary Joſeph Ryan, of Clonmel, was unanimouſly elected their future abbot. With joy on their countenances, and thankſgiving on their tongues, the holy brotherhood could ſcarce contain themſelves, becauſe of the happineſs they felt at the appointment of ſuch a great and good man. The abbot elect was then introduced into his place in the choir, while the monaſtery bells were pealing forth the joy of the happy inmates. On entering the church, the "Te Deum" was chanted by the reſponſive choir in thankſgiving to God, whoſe Holy Spirit was invoked, and directed the choice juſt made. Here he was confirmed in his new capacity by having the croſier put into his hand; a very intereſting ceremony. From the

manor, granted for the ſite of the building a large tract of mountain-land, compriſing above five hundred acres, at a nominal rent. Much merit is really due to the monks for the perſevering induſtry with which they have cultivated ſo large and barren a waſte, upon which no herbage previouſly grew. Now ſchools are erected, the ſoil is made productive, and altogether the place looks as if it had been touched by the wand of the enchanter.

The Ciſtercian order is conſidered inferior to none but the Carthuſian,—ſo called from *Chartreux*, near Grenoble, in Dauphine,—which was inſtituted A. D. 1084, by Bruno, a native of Cologne, and canon of the Cathedral of Rheims. "This zealous eccleſiaſtic," obſerves the hiſtorian, "who had neither power to reform, nor patience to bear, the diſſolute manners of his archbiſhop, Manaſſe, retired from his church, with ſix of his companions, and having obtained the permiſſion of Hugh, biſhop of Grenoble, fixed his reſidence in a miſerable deſert. He adopted at firſt the rule of St.

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choir he was conducted by the biſhop through the church into the chapter-room, and inſtalled in the abbatial throne, where he is in future to guide and govern this holy and truly perfect community.—*The Tablet.*

Benedict, to which he added a conſiderable number of ſevere and rigorous precepts. His ſucceſſors, however, went ſtill farther, and impoſed upon the Carthuſians new laws, much more intolerable than thoſe of their founder; laws which inculcated the higheſt degrees of auſterity that the moſt gloomy imagination could invent. And yet, notwithſtanding all this, it is remarkable, that no monaſtic ſociety degenerated ſo little from the ſeverity of its primitive inſtitution and diſcipline, as that of the Carthuſians."*

The Trappiſts derive their name from La Trappe, ſituate on the borders of Perche and Normandy, in which locality Routrou, Count du Perche, in order to fulfil a vow made by him when in danger of being ſhipwrecked, founded an eſtabliſhment of the order, A. D. 1140.† With reference to the diſcipline enjoined by the Ciſtercian conſtitutions, it will be ſufficient to confine my remarks to a delineation of its moſt prominent features.

The monks of this order are divided into two claſſes; namely, choir-religious, and lay-brothers. The former are either prieſts, or

* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. Heylot's Hiſt. des Ordres, tom. vii. p. 366.

† Memoirs of Count D'Auvergne.

candidates for the prieſthood, although there are ſome among them, who, from affected humility, would not accept ſo exalted a poſition. The choir-monks wear *white* habits or tunics, with an additional garment attached, which covers the head. At the various canonical hours they chant the ſervice of the church, in the choir of the chapel attached to their monaſtery. They take the firſt place in the refectory and dormitory, and are allowed certain other privileges, needleſs to mention, which are denied to the ſubordinate members of the community.

The lay-brothers, for the moſt part, are a claſs of vulgar and illiterate perſons, being diſtinguiſhed from the choir-religious by a *brown* habit and hood which deſcends ſo low as almoſt to conceal their faces from obſervation. Theſe individuals do not aſſiſt in the Latin office, but as a ſubſtitute recite, or more properly mutter over, a number of *paters* and *aves*, which they reckon on their many-ſtringed beads—the only mode of performing devotional exerciſes practiſed by the ignorant of the papacy, for which cauſe Mantuan has very juſtly ſtyled their religion—

> " Religionem,
> Quæ filo inſertis numerat ſua murmura baccis ; "

or "a religion that numbers their murmurs by berries filed upon a ſtring." Might not this kind of prayer be truly likened to the Βαττολογια, or vain repetitions of the Gentiles,* which Chriſt condemned, and againſt which he cautions his followers?—"When ye pray, uſe not vain repetitions as the heathen do; for they think that they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking. Be not ye, therefore, like unto them."†

The lay-brothers perform the drudgery of the kitchen, and act generally in the capacity of ſervants; but are under preciſely the ſame diſcipline, in moſt other reſpects, as the choir-monks. Each brother has a *mat* for a couch, which accommodation, trifling as it is, was denied on the Continent. The entire community riſe at the early hour of one in the morning, and are ſpared the inconvenience of dreſſing by rarely taking off their clothes. They aſſiſt at and celebrate ſeveral maſſes each day; have long mental and vocal devotional exerciſes; wear hair-cloth next their ſkin; work much in the fields; keep *perpetual*

* Ohe, jam deſine Deos, uxor gratulando obtundere;
Niſi illos tuo ex ingenio judicas,
Set nihil credas intelligere, niſi idem dictum eſt centies.
Terence, *Heauton*, act v. ſcene i.

† Matt. vi. 7, 8.

ſilence, expreſſing their wants but by ſigns; obſerve two Lenten ſeaſons in the year; partake of neither fleſh nor fiſh, at their ſcanty meals, which generally are compoſed of little more than coarſe brown bread, prepared by themſelves; and mutually adminiſter the "diſcipline," or flagellation, on each ſucceſſive Friday—an act of penance rendered if not more ſevere, at leaſt more meritorious, by the ſolemn recital of the pſalm "*Miſerere mei Deus*," during the painful and ſometimes bloody operation.* A grave is always in readineſs to receive as a tenant within its chill embrace the laſt remains of him, who by protracted and extreme voluntary ſuffering, haſtens his approach to that final lodgment; and occaſionally the poor monk is ſent to meditate, for half-an-hour together, over the yawning ſepulchre. When one of the fraternity comes to die, he is laid upon a bed of aſhes ſpread on the ground in the form of a croſs!

* This mode of torture, like moſt of the other puerile and wicked practices in the Romiſt church, is of pagan origin. The prieſts of Baal, like the Ciſtercians, had the practice among them of whipping, lacerating, and ſcourging themſelves, until the blood came; and the prieſts of the goddeſs Cybele, or Bellona, were wont to cut themſelves with knives and lancets.—*Pictet. Huit Sermons ſur l'Examen des Religions*, p. 261. edit. Genève. 1716.

At a later period the Ciſtercian monks eſtabliſhed themſelves at Charnwood Foreſt, near Loughborough, Leiceſterſhire, where they have erected a magnificent and ſpacious monaſtic ſtructure. Singular enough, on this very ground once ſtood the Ciſtercian abbey of Garendon, which, with ſimilar inſtitutions, was diſſolved under Henry VIII. The ſite of the new convent, not ſeventeen years ſince, preſented to the traveller a wild, hilly, and deſolate region, with ſcarce any appearance of vegetable life. Now, the whole adjoining country is reclaimed, and exhibits, eſpecially in autumn, an aſpect of cheerfulneſs and luxuriance. A naked and ſterile ſoil has been reduced to cultivation and fertility. Fruits, corn, and other produce of the firſt deſcription, are grown around theſe cloiſtered walls, and yield in the neighbouring markets the higheſt prices. Here may be obſerved all the paraphernalia appertaining to the beſt farm-houſe—a cow-houſe, a dairy, a forge, a mill, a bake-houſe, and even a brewery; all placed under the vigilant ſuperintendence of the brothers. On the farm may be obſerved the choir-religious, diveſted of his flowing habit, in plain working coſtume, like thoſe of inferior grade, who for the moſt part

have all their lives been accuſtomed to manual toil, delving the ground and cheerfully labouring as the others, apparently reſigned to the will—not of Heaven certainly, but of his ſuperior and his rule! There is a gueſt-room ſet apart for the reception of ſtrangers, who are kindly and hoſpitably entertained irreſpective of their religious creed. Upon the viſitor's arrival he is immediately conducted by the gueſt-maſter to the chapel. From thence he is led to the reception-room. During ſupper ſome portion of an entertaining book is read aloud; and at an appointed hour each gueſt is ſhown to a ſimple, yet comfortable ſleeping apartment, which conſiſts of a bed, a kneeling-deſk, a chair or two, ſome books, and a common deal table, with conveniences for writing.

It is really an extraordinary ſight to obſerve an order of Ciſtercian monks in England at this ſtage of our civilization. To ſee an abbey remarkable for its architectural deſign and perfect in all its interior ramifications, with its abbot, prior,* ſub-prior, and chapter, com-

* The prior was often at the head of a great monaſtic foundation: many of theſe alſo had a place in the higher houſe of parliament. Sometimes the prior ruled an abbey

priſing brethren lettered and unlettered, noble and plebeian, prieſts and laics, all bound by vows, adopting the moſt ſtringent monaſtic rules, and living in apparent harmony and ſimplicity, watching, praying, faſting, toiling in the fields; and thus paſſing dreary and dreadful years of a ſtrange and unnatural exiſtence. This order was never regarded as dangerous to either the civil or religious powers—which cauſed Napoleon to ſay of its members: "*Des hommes qui travaillent beaucoup et qui mangent peu, et par conſéquence ne ſauraient nuire à l'état.*"

The Ciſtercians have generally been remarkable for the ſtrict obſervance of their rules, eſpecially that which enjoins ſilence. A ſtory is told by Gaillardin, of a lay-brother belonging to the convent of Villiers in Flanders, who thwarted the deſigns of a nobleman that had laid a wager upon his ſucceſs in

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ſubordinate to a great abbey; but in theſe leſſer abbeys or cells there was often a conſiderable difference; ſome were altogether ſubject to the great abbey, from whence the officers and monks were brought, and the revenues made a part of the common ſtock; to others a prior was ſent from the abbey, and the convent paid a penſion yearly as an acknowledgment of their ſubjection; but in other matters they acted as an independent body.—*Monaſticon Hiber.*

cauſing the poor monk to break ſilence. He opened the converſation by aſking his road, which was at once pointed out. Other queſtions were put, to which no reſponſe was given. The nobleman at this became enraged, threatened, vociferated, lifted his hand, and actually ſtruck the religious, who manifeſted no uneaſineſs or anger thereat, but gently turned the other cheek to his tormentor. This was too much for the aggreſſor, who upon preparing to remount his horſe, ſaw the monk caſt down his ſpade and run to aſſiſt him. The young nobleman being overcome by compunction, aſked forgiveneſs, and ſhed tears. And ſo great an impreſſion did the conduct of the brother make on his mind, that he himſelf renounced the world and became a monk.*

Both the choir and lay religious make vows of poverty, chaſtity, and obedience;† and

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* Gaillar. Hiſt. Ab. de la Trappe.

† Theſe vows are not profitable, much leſs neceſſary, but pernicious to the chriſtian church. From the vow of *continence* aroſe abominable filthineſſes of all kinds in the monks' cloyſters. From the vow of feigned *poverty* aroſe ſo many kinds of unprofitable drones, which devour the honey of the ſedulous bees. From the vow of blinde and abſolute *obedience*, flow ſuch execrable inſolencies againſt the lives of princes, and ſuch horrible treaſons as have

by virtue of a papal bull, have the privilege extended to them of making theſe vows perpetual. Hence, after a trying noviciate of a few years, the benighted and unſocial monk becomes bound to his cloiſter, where he ſtrives, by the practice of rigid obſervances, either to obtain an increaſe of merit, or with diſguſt for life, to haſten the termination of that exiſtence which an all-wiſe Creator had beſtowed for better and wiſer purpoſes, viz. the advancement of objects beneficial to the human family. Thus does the unhappy ſolitary partially fruſtrate and neutraliſe the deſigns of heavenly wiſdom, and, in the words of the poet—

> "Sets ſuperſtition high on virtue's throne,
> Then thinks his Maker's temper like his own;
> Hence are his altars ſtained with reeking gore,
> As if he could atone for crimes by more.
> Thus, whilſt offended Heaven he ſtrives in vain
> T' appeaſe by faſts, and voluntary pain,
> Ev'n in repenting, he provokes again."

Nor are the words which Minutius Felix addreſſed to the devotees of the heathen divinities, who uſed, in like manner, to cut and laſh themſelves in honour of their gods,

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frequently been perpetrated by the Jeſuits.—*Leigh's Body of Divinity*. London, 1654. lib. viii. p. 743.

inapplicable to theſe monks :—" O, ye heathens !" ſaid he, " what infatuation, what frenzy has ſeized upon you, that you thus diſhonour yourſelves on pretence of honouring your gods ? You ſupplicate your gods with the mouths of your wounds. It were better to have no religion at all, than be of ſuch a religion. Certainly thoſe who are guilty of ſuch fanatical exceſſes muſt be loſt to all reaſon and common ſenſe !"

The Chriſtian Brothers.

I SHALL now draw attention to the religious fraternity known as the Chriſtian Brothers, or, Brothers of the Chriſtian Schools,—an order originally planted in Paris towards the cloſe of the XVIIth century by John Baptiſt de la Salle,—a man of no ordinary learning and ability, and remarkable for energy, perſeverance, ſingularity, and devotion to one object. He was born at Rheims on the 30th of April, 1651, and was the firſt fruit of the union between Mademoiſelle Moët de Brouillet and M. de la Salle, who held a high appointment in the Preſidial Court of that place. His parents had deſigned him

for ſome exalted ſecular purſuit; but at an early age having declared his intention to enter the prieſthood, they moſt reluctantly conſented, notwithſtanding that ſuch conſent overturned all their darling projects. Upon completing his eccleſiaſtic ſtudies in Paris, he was ordained prieſt by his archbiſhop M. le Tellier, on the Eaſter of the year 1671, and entered upon a canonry in the cathedral of Rheims.

His taſte for monaſtic diſcipline ſoon manifeſted itſelf by the way in which he regulated his houſehold. There were appointed hours for riſing, ſtudy, and devotion. Silence was likewiſe enjoined, and the practice of ſpiritual reading during the refection. Naturally enough theſe proceedings attracted public notice, and the young eccleſiaſtic was ſtrongly cenſured for impoſing ſuch unneceſſary reſtrictions upon his younger brothers. He was upbraided with being ſingular in his manners, moroſe and auſtere in his habits, and a "diſgrace to the family," and the illuſtrious chapter of which he was a member. So far from ſuch opprobrium cauſing him to relax the diſcipline he had adopted, it rendered him ſtill more punctilious in his idioſyncratic obſervances.

De la Salle had a ſtrong natural diſpoſition to drowſineſs, which in his caſe, almoſt amounted to a malady. His ſervant had inſtructions to awake him at four o'clock every morning, and not to retire until he had dreſſed. He then entered upon his devotions; but ſleepineſs, which ſeemed to have been his demon, quickly returned. To remedy this, according to his biographer, Père Garreau, of the Society of Jeſus, "he condemned himſelf to kneel during prayer on ſharp-pointed ſtones, and thus ſucceeded in defeating the enemy, as the ſevere pain which they occaſioned kept him continually attentive. This was only a prelude to the mortifications which he practiſed when Superior of the Chriſtian Brothers; and thus it was by this means that God unconſciouſly diſpoſed him for the noble work of their inſtitution."* About the year 1681, an accident occurred to our hero which would have proved fatal, had not Providence miraculouſly interpoſed to preſerve the life of the ſaint. So ſays his biographer. The ſtory goes, that one day when returning from the country, in conſequence of the ground being

* Life of the Ven. J. B. De la Salle, D.D.

covered with ſnow, he happened to fall into an abyſs remote from human ſuccour. With the proſpect of immediate death before his mind, he remained unmoved, and tranquilly beſought aid from heaven. Immediately the ſnow, aſſuming a conſiſtency, became hardened beneath his tread; and thus was he enabled to extricate himſelf from his perilous poſition. In order, however, that he ſhould retain a grateful remembrance of this divine interpoſition, the Lord was pleaſed to afflict him with a rupture!*

M. de la Salle, after much labour, diſappointment and vexatious oppoſition, ſucceeded in founding a monaſtic inſtitute at Rheims, by collecting together a few diſciples. In order more effectually to carry out his purpoſes he reſigned his canonry; and for the edification and encouragement of the brothers made a total renunciation of his property in favour of the poor. He next drew up temporarily rules for the guidance of the community, adopted eccleſiaſtical coſtume, and fixed upon a name for the new order. Having, with two others, in the November of 1691, made vows of aſſociation

* Ibid.

and ſtability to the inſtitution, even although they ſhould be neceſſitated through poverty to aſk alms or live on bread alone, he eſtabliſhed a noviciate in Vaugirard, where he met with the co-operation of Count du Charmel. "What is read of the ancient ſolitaries concerning auſterity and mortifications," obſerves Père Garreau, "can ſcarcely ſurpaſs the practices of the novices at Vaugirard. They inhabited a houſe without furniture or a window that could be cloſed. The rooms were open to the winds, to rain, ſleet, and ſnow. They had no beds except badly made-up palliaſſes. Two counterpanes only were in the eſtabliſhment; one of which was for the ſick, and the other for M. de la Salle, but was never worn by him. The building was deſtitute of both fire and kitchen; conſequently, food had to be prepared at Rue du Bac; and this conſiſted only of ſome remains afforded by the charitable community of St. Sulpice. The dreſs of the novices announced extreme poverty, and though they practiſed long prayers, faſts, and watching, yet were they content and happy."*

De la Salle made it a practice to faſt for

* Life of the Ven. J. B. De la Salle, D.D.

days together, in order to overcome all kinds of repugnance to food. It is ſaid that he knew not the nature of the edibles which uſed to be ſerved at table. On one occaſion, the cook by miſtake placed before the brothers ſome prepared wormwood. After taſting it, they believed they were poiſoned, and ceaſed eating; but the ſuperior finiſhed the meal. Upon manifeſting to him their uneaſineſs, the food was examined and its nature diſcovered, which circumſtance continued long to form matter for amuſement.

Having founded an inſtitute in Paris, M. de la Salle retired to the ſolitude of Vaugirard where, after faſting and macerating his body, he proceeded to frame a code of rules whereby the various communities he had organiſed ſhould uniformly be governed. When theſe were completed he ſummoned the brethren together, and having placed his collection of decrees in their hands, authoriſed them to expreſs thereupon their free opinion. The majority readily concurred in the views of their ſuperior, while others murmured at the rigidity of the propoſed reſtrictions. This want of unanimity among his diſciples led M. de la Salle to enter upon a further retreat of eight days, during which time he made

ſuch modifications as wiſdom and prudence dictated. The following was the reſult:— The brothers were to obſerve ſtrict ſilence at recreation, until they had firſt ſaluted the brother-director and obtained his permiſſion. They were not to ſpeak of any individual but in terms of praiſe. They were not to indulge in any frivolous talking, or what was merely calculated to indulge an idle curioſity. Silence was to be obſerved when they ſeparated after recreation. Levity and jeſting were to be avoided. Loud talk and laughter were prohibited. They were neither to contradict nor to correct each other, this being reſerved to the brother-director. Finally, they were to diſcourſe on ſuch topics only as might lead to the love of God and to the practice of virtue. Theſe rules were further extended and modified at a ſubſequent period.

The next ſtep taken by the founder of this new order was, to have the brothers vow ſtability to the inſtitute and obedience to himſelf. Meanwhile the ſchoolmaſters of Paris viewed the progreſs of this inſtitution with jealouſy and as inimical to their intereſts, which undoubtedly was the caſe. Accordingly, they raiſed clamours againſt the monks; and having taken legal

proceedings, obtained a proviſional ſentence, by virtue of which they took poſſeſſion of whatever effects were found in the ſchools of St. Sulpice. The brothers were next cited before the authorities, and pending the deciſion of the court had to cloſe their ſchools. This was no ſmall trial to the energetic founder, who for three months had to view his cheriſhed plans inoperative. After the caſe had been heard the judge decided, that the abſtracted property ſhould be reſtored to the ſchools, and that the brothers had authority to reſume their functions; a ſentence which was received by the people with ſhouts of acclamation.

So great had the reputation of M. de la Salle and his community become, that neighbouring biſhops, and even Louis XIV., patroniſed and advanced the intereſts of the new fraternity. Perſons of all ranks and conditions flocked to the ſchools, which had now been eſtabliſhed at Chartres, Calais, Troyes, St. Yon, Dijon, Rouen, Grenoble, St. Denis, and the principal towns of France. Even an eſtabliſhment was founded in Rome, A. D. 1702, under the joint protection of Clement XI. and the archbiſhop; a conſummation which De la Salle had long

and earneſtly deſired. Theſe indefatigable labours and protracted auſterities, however, brought on acute illneſs; and he expired at Rouen, on Good Friday, 1719, at the age of 68 years. In 1734, the brothers of St. Yon, having built a fine church, ſolicited Nicholas, archbiſhop of Rouen, to grant to them the remains of their founder; which requeſt was unheſitatingly complied with. The account of the exhumation cannot better be given than in the biographer's own words:—"On the 16th July, about three o'clock, P. M., M. Bridel, vicar-general of Rouen, came to the church of St. Severus, accompanied by many clergymen and ſome members of parliament. The tomb of M. de la Salle was opened in his preſence. The body was found entire; but his ſacerdotal ornaments were decayed. Corruption had ſpared the taffel of his ſquare cap, his ſhoes, and the little wooden croſs, which had been placed between his hands. All theſe were taken away with a pious ſolicitude by the aſſiſtants, who wiſhed to preſerve them as relics. When the body had been exhumed, and a verbal proceſs of the ſtate in which it was found had been drawn up, the proceſſion commenced its route. It was compoſed of more

than three hundred eccleſiaſtics, all in ſurplices, and holding lighted tapers. The body was borne by ſixteen prieſts, in ſurplices and ſtoles, and four canons from the metropolis held the corners of the pall. To maintain good order among the immenſe crowds that aſſiſted at this ſolemn ceremony, troops were placed in files, between which the clergy walked. When the proceſſion approached the houſe of St. Yon, the brothers went out to meet it, carrying lighted tapers, and joining their prayers to the ſolemn pſalms uſed on ſuch occaſions. Shortly after the entry of the body into the church, the preſident of the parliament, ſeveral magiſtrates and ladies of diſtinction, who had juſt arrived, expreſſed a deſire to ſee the holy body. The coffin was opened to ſatisfy their pious curioſity. M. Bridel, who officiated, bleſſed the vault, and the precious remains were depoſited therein on the ſame evening. Next day the archbiſhop conſecrated the chapel, and celebrated in it the firſt maſs."*

Between the years 1699, and the 19th of February 1790, when the National Aſſembly iſſued a decree ſuppreſſing all religious ſocie-

* Life of the Ven. J. B. De la Salle, by Père Garreau, S. J.

ties, this inſtitute flouriſhed remarkably, notwithſtanding the legal impediments and ſevere oppoſition it had frequently to encounter, of which the factious ſpirit and baſe conduct of ſome members were not the leaſt. After the Reign of Terror, during which the property of the brothers had been confiſcated, and even ſome had fallen martyrs, along with three prelates, to democratic fury,* Napoleon re-eſtabliſhed the order by a decree iſſued on the 10th March, 1808; though its progreſs was ſcarcely perceptible until the reſtoration of the Bourbon family to the throne of France, when it once more began to flouriſh. In 1724, Lewis XV. confirmed the ſociety, by granting to it letters-patent; and through the inſtrumentality of Cardinal Rohan, who held the office of ambaſſador, the rules of the new ſodality were approved by Benedict XIII. and the inſtitute itſelf

* The convent of Diſcalced Carmelites, where theſe brothers met with their death, is ſituate in the Rue de Vaugirard. It has been redeemed by Madame de Soyecourt, a Carmelite nun, and now belongs to that community. Its church is remarkable for its elegance and beautiful dome. The ſpots of blood from the martyred prieſts are ſtill ſeen on the walls and kiſſed with reſpect. An interior chapel at the foot of the garden preſerves alſo ſimilar traces. It is viſited annually by numbers of the faithful.—*Note to Life of De la Salle by the Chriſtian Brothers.*

elevated to the dignity of a religious order. Bulls to this effect were diſpatched from Rome in January, 1725.

From the official returns of the French ſuperior-general up to the 10th November, 1842, we find that there are in France three hundred and twenty-ſix convents of the order, containing 3,024 members, including novices. In Italy, there are thirteen houſes, and 114 brothers. In Piedmont, eleven eſtabliſhments, containing 135 inmates. In Belgium, ſeventeen monaſteries and 185 monks. Beſides which there are foundations in Switzerland, Greece, and even Canada—the entire amounting to three hundred and ninety religious houſes, and 3,615 members.

An eminent writer obſerves, that "unleſs a tree has borne bloſſoms in ſpring, you will vainly look for fruit on it in autumn."* Now, in proof that modern monaſticiſm is juſt as prone to indulge in the ſupernatural as in its palmy days of ignorance and ſuperſtition, when even monks did not know the name of the rule by which they had bound themſelves to follow,† it will only be neceſ-

* Gueſſes at Truth.

† Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 286. (Soames.)

ſary for me to inſert the following mythical ſtory, related as ſtubborn fact, from the pen of the Jeſuitical biographer of M. de la Salle; though one can ſcarcely imagine how ſuch fatuity of mind could be exhibited in this enlightened age of human progreſs. It is a legend of the 18th century!—

"The Chevalier d'Armſtadt, a young lord of an illuſtrious houſe in Germany, quitting the ſervice of the emperor, after the battle of Denain, came to France, and paſſing through Lyons, he delayed there for ſome days to ſee whatever might be curious in that city. Much converſation was then at Lyons about a demoniac who was to be exorciſed. The chevalier, who was not a catholic and was but little diſpoſed to believe what is called *poſſeſſion*, had the curioſity to go ſee the exorciſms performed. He entered the church a ſceptic pitying the credulity and ſimplicity of the ſpectators. When he approached the demoniac, writhing in frightful contortions, thus addreſſed him: 'Thou believeſt not that there are demons, but one day thou ſhalt feel their fury.' Theſe words were to him like a thunderbolt. It was a grace which God granted him. He was faithful to it at the moment. He went out

in conſternation, making the moſt mournful reflections upon his unbelief and the diſorders of his life. He reſolved to renounce his errors and enter into the boſom of the catholic church, whoſe doctrine he began to ſtudy; and ſome months after he made his abjuration to the archbiſhop of Lyons. Then, with the deſign of performing a ſuitable penance, he went to Paris in order to place himſelf under the direction of ſome zealous and enlightened confeſſor capable of aiding him to quit his irregularities. God led him to the community of St. Sulpice. One of the members, a virtuous prieſt, adviſed him to fortify himſelf ſtill more in his good reſolutions by retiring into the houſe of M. de la Salle. The fervent penitent followed this counſel and became a boarder among the brothers on the 8th of October, 1714.

"He almoſt inſtantly wiſhed to perform the ſame exerciſes as the novices. It was then the demon kept the promiſe which he had made to him at Lyons. The chevalier had received many dangerous wounds, which he had cured by means prohibited by the law of God. From the moment of his entry among the brothers he felt great pains which increaſed daily. He loſt his reſt, and paſſed

the night in groans loud enough to be heard by thoſe in the next apartments. The brothers thought theſe were the groans of a converted heart. One morning he was abſent from the exerciſes. They went to his chamber, where they found him in bed, motionleſs, ſenſeleſs, and weltering in his blood. Terrified at this ſad ſpectacle, they haſtened to afford him relief. The remedies preſcribed took no effect. He remained ſome days motionleſs and ſpeechleſs. They deſpaired of his life; and he received extreme unction.

"This ſacrament produced a wonderful effect. Immediately his gaping wounds cloſed. He recovered his ſpeech and recollection, and next day he was able to reſume the exerciſes of the novices. Shortly after he relapſed into the ſame ſtate and gave ſigns of life only by frightful contortions, vomiting blood and rolling his eyes in a horrible manner. He was often obſerved to fix his eyes upon a particular part of the chamber, to move his lips rapidly, and to make motions with his arms like to thoſe of a man who fights and wards off blows. He paſſed the whole night in theſe violent agitations. A viſion of four hours ſucceeded,

in which he ſaw, under frightful forms, a crowd of demons, who threatened to kill him, if he did not immediately quit the houſe. This ſpectacle coſt him extraordinary efforts, which reduced him to ſuch debility that they thought he would expire at every moment. After this he beheld the Bleſſed Virgin, to whom he was very devout ſince his converſion. Her preſence diſperſed the infernal troop. She approached to conſole him, and in a ſhort time he recovered.

"No ſooner was he in the re-enjoyment of his health than he begged to be admitted to the habit of the brothers, and was conſequently received. The demon at this became furious, and aſſailed him by new torments, ſeizing him by the neck and graſping him ſo tightly as if he would have ſtrangled him, and thus deprived him of the power of reſpiration. His tongue became thick and incapable of motion; yet his recollection ſtill remained, and he received the holy viaticum with marks of great devotion. The community thinking he was about to expire recited the prayers for a departing ſoul. As they proceeded the demon gradually relaxed his fury, and finally left him in health and peace.

" The evil ſpirit, exaſperated at his having embraced a life ſo holy and ſo penitent, ſoon returned again to the charge. One day he ſo moved the ſprings of the chevalier's imagination that he thought he beheld the prieſt who adviſed him to join the community, brother Bartholomew, and the maſter of novices, each armed with a heavy diſcipline, lacerating his back in a moſt pitileſs manner. This was to inſpire him with a horror for theſe three men who directed him in the affairs of his ſalvation. The idea remained ſome time engraven on his mind without being diſſuaded from its reality; when, at length, he knew the malice of the impoſture he animated himſelf the more to ſuſtain his attacks. Satan aſſaulted him anew. He tore the nails from his feet. He felt eaſily convinced of this fact by the teſtimony of his eyes. *This was ſeen by all the brothers!* From all theſe appearances M. de la Salle judged that the novice was poſſeſſed by a demon: but, as he knew a perſon may be deceived in ſuch caſes, he reſerved his thoughts to himſelf. He ſhut himſelf up in the chamber of the novice and repeated over him the prayers of the church for demoniacs. Theſe prayers were efficacious. The demon was

forced to quit the unfortunate young man, who no longer felt his attacks, but who very ſoon after proved faithleſs to his vocation."*

The firſt attempt to eſtabliſh a ſimilar religious guild in this country was made in Ireland by Mr. Edmond Rice, of Waterford, during the year 1802, when a few brothers aſſociated under the foſtering care and ſpiritual guidance of Dr. Thomas Huſſey, the Roman catholic prelate of that city. The conſtitutions of the Preſentation order were originally adopted by the members of this new community, but theſe were ſubſequently relinquiſhed for thoſe of their foreign confrères.

So rapidly did this inſtitution progreſs that in 1808, it poſſeſſed three foundations, although the number of poſtulants were neceſſarily limited. It was then thought deſirable to make annual vows, as thoſe of a longer duration are not permitted except in an order confirmed by the papal ſee. Accordingly Dr. Power, who had ſucceeded to the prelacy, drew up the required formulæ; and the monks, after an eight-days' retreat, pronounced them in the biſhop's preſence.

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* Life of the Ven. J. B. De la Salle.

The inſtitute ſhortly afterwards aſſumed a regular ſhape. There was leſs difficulty in obtaining ſubjects, and its further extenſion became manifeſt. Dr. Power wrote to the Propaganda, giving a detailed account of what had been done, and praying for its approval. In reply, Cardinal de Pietro ſuggeſted that the rules and conſtitutions of the ſociety be laid before Pius VII., a proceeding, however, which was never taken.

After Dr. Murray had returned from Paris to Dublin in 1817, he ſubmitted to the brothers there the rules of the French inſtitute, together with the apoſtolic brief by which it was confirmed. A general chapter was convened in Waterford on 19th Aug. 1817, in order to conſider the propriety of embracing the propoſed conſtitutions. After much diſcuſſion and deliberation, it was finally agreed to accept as many of the articles ſpecified in the brief as were conſidered feaſible. The rules thus adopted were then tranſmitted to Rome for approval, accompanied by a memorial from the brothers, and letters from ſeveral biſhops recommending the pontiff to grant the prayer thereof. On the 5th of Feb. 1820, a brief was iſſued by Pius VII. confirming not only theſe articles but

the inſtitute itſelf; which document was conveyed to Ireland by Dr. Kenny, of the Society of Jeſus, early the following year.

The brothers, nineteen in number, aſſembled at Thurles on the 25th of Auguſt following, when this papal brief was read and adopted, there being but three diſſentient voices. Votes of thanks were alſo paſſed to thoſe prelates under whoſe guardianſhip the inſtitute had flouriſhed. The ſenior brotherhood then adjourned to the convent at Waterford, and entered upon a retreat of eight days, which was conducted by the biſhop. When the retreat had terminated, they proceeded to the domeſtic chapel. After ſundry religious ſervices the brief was publicly read. During the reading the monks remained on their knees. Then in preſence of each other, and with lighted tapers in their hands, they ſeverally pronounced irrevocable vows. The next ſtep was to proceed to ſcrutiny in order to elect a ſuperior-general; which office, by a majority of ſuffrages, was conferred upon the founder. At firſt the governing power was not inveſted in an individual beyond ten years, after which a freſh election took place. It was thought deſirable, however, to make the general's authority ceaſe only with his life;

which decree was alſo confirmed by a papal reſcript, in 1833.* Upon the reſignation of the late Mr. Edmond Rice, in July, 1838, owing to infirmity, Mr. M. P. Rierdon, a very eſtimable and accompliſhed man, was elevated to the rank of ſuperior-general.

The annexed is the official returns of the condition of the order up to a recent period: —"The Inſtitute is compoſed of nineteen houſes, having ninety ſchool-brothers, fifteen ſerving brothers, fifty-eight ſchools, and about ten thouſand children and adults under inſtruction. There are eleven of the houſes ſituate in Ireland; namely, in Dublin (three); Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Dungarvan, Carrick-on-Suir, Thurles, Enniſtymon, and Claren Bridge, County Galway: ſeven in England, London (two); Mancheſter (two) Liverpool, Preſton, and Sunderland; and one in Sydney, to which three brothers were ſent

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* This clearly exhibits the ſpiritual juriſdiction which pontiffs aſſume over the liege ſubjects of kings and emperors. The very pope alluded to, in his bull, "*Ad Perpetuam rei Memoriam*," dated from the church of Santa Maria, the Major at Rome, the 10th of July, 1809, uſes theſe emphatic words:—"Let them once again underſtand that, *by the law of Chriſt, their ſovereignty is ſubjected to our* throne!!!"—Sabine's Hiſt. Chriſt. Church, chap. i. p. 553.

with the Moſt Rev. Dr. Polding, at the expreſs requeſt of the Sacred Congregation."

The Fathers of the Oratory.

AMONG the moſt remarkable of the religious aſſociations which aroſe in defence of the church during the time of Luther, and have ſprung up in this country in our own day, may be reckoned that of the Oratorians, or Fathers of the Oratory. This inſtitute was firſt founded in Italy by Philip Neri, the ſingular incidents and extraordinary exploits of whoſe life are not without intereſt; a few of which will doubtleſs prove entertaining to the curious reader.

Neri, or Nerius, was born in Florence, A. D. 1515, during the pontificate of Leo X. His father followed the occupation of an attorney, and was a great friend of the monks, eſpecially the Dominicans. His mother was the deſcendant of a noble family who held diſtinguiſhed offices in the ſtate during the time of the republic. Philip, who was the youngeſt of four children, manifeſted during boyhood a precocity of mind and quickneſs of perception unuſual in perſons of ſuch

tender years. To theſe may be added conſiderable ſuſceptibility and a docile and obedient diſpoſition. So ſubmiſſive was he, it is ſaid, to his father, that he cauſed him only on one occaſion ſome ſlight uneaſineſs. The cauſe was this: Happening one day to be ſinging pſalms with a younger member of the family, his eldeſt ſiſter Caterina teaſed and tormented him, upon which he gave her a ſlight puſh. This act ſo diſpleaſed his father that he chaſtiſed the delinquent, who repented even to tears of his miſdeed. The ſtrictneſs with which he followed his mother's injunctions was not only exemplary but ſcrupulous. If ſhe directed him to remain in a certain place, nothing could induce him to quit it without her expreſs permiſſion. He was equally dutiful to his ſtep-mother, who upon her death-bed declared that his very remembrance was to her a conſolation. His comrades nicknamed him "The good Pippo," owing to the blandneſs of his manners and the blameleſſneſs of his life. One of his biographers informs us that, "One day when he was about eight or nine years old, he ſaw an aſs ſtanding in the court-yard, and with a boy's thoughtleſſneſs jumped upon its back. By ſome accident he and the beaſt both fell down

a flight of ſtairs into the cellar. He was cruſhed beneath the aſs, and no part of his body was viſible except an arm. A woman who witneſſed the accident ran to him and drew him from under the animal, not as ſhe ſuppoſed killed or maimed, but ſafe and ſound, without the leaſt veſtige of his fall."* It is further related that, "Once returning from the Zecca to the Petti palace, near which he was born and dwelt, he loſt a gold necklace, but no ſooner had he prayed than he found it. At another time he recovered by the ſame means ſome things which had dropped from under his arm a great way off."†

Neri when a boy made conſiderable proficiency in rhetoric and other ſciences under the tuition of Clementi, a man of ſome notoriety in his day. At the age of eighteen, when his grammar ſtudies were completed, he was ſent to reſide with a wealthy uncle, named Romulo, who intended him for his heir. Not reliſhing however the ſort of ſociety into which he was thrown, and fearing the allurements of the world, he ſhortly quitted his uncle's roof and travelled to Rome a friend-

* F. Bacci's Life of St. Philip Neri. Trans. from the Italian by F. W. Faber, prieſt of the Oratory, vol. i.

† Ibid.

leſs pilgrim, apparently without object or plan. Here he entered the houſe of a Florentine nobleman, named Galeotto Caccia, who took a great intereſt in his juvenile but eccentric *protégé*. Shortly afterwards he commenced ſuch a courſe of exceſſive abſtinence and led ſo rigid a life, that not only in Rome but at Florence he attracted public attention. His chief food was a little bread and water daily, to which with difficulty he was induced to add a few olives and ſome herbs. To ſuch a degree did he carry his poverty, that before he left his home he would accept of nothing from his father but a couple of ſhirts. His chamber, which was a ſmall apartment, contained ſimply a meagre bed, a few books, and ſome linen ſuſpended upon a cord againſt the wall. Frequently he ſpent whole nights in prayer; and every day he viſited ſeveral churches, although they were miles apart and ſome of them without the city. According to another biographer, Galloni, the divine love ſo dilated his heart, that the griſtle which connected the fourth and fifth ribs was broken, which accident gave freer ſcope for that organ to perform its functions.* In this ſtate he

* Acta Sanctorum, Maii, tom. vi. cap. i. (Vita S. Philippi Nerii.)

lived fifty years. So violently did his heart pulsate that whenever he pressed any of his disciples to his breast, a remedy which they were wont successfully to employ when labouring under temptation, their heads bounded off from his body as though they had received a severe galvanic shock. The internal sensation of heat which Philip constantly felt was so excessive, that although aged he had to have recourse even in rigid winters to light clothing, spare diet, and cooling medicines. Besides, he used to sleep with his windows open all night, and have attendants to fan him while in bed. Shortly after Gregory XIII. made a law commanding all priests to wear surplices in the confessional, Philip happened one day to visit the pope with his cassock and other robes unfastened. Upon Gregory requiring an explanation, Philip remarked: "Why, I really cannot bear my waistcoat buttoned, and yet your holiness will have it that I shall wear a surplice besides." "No, no," replied the pope, "the order was not for you; do as you please." *

Neri, with fourteen or fifteen poor unlettered companions, organised the foundation

* Bacci's Life of St. Philip Neri, trans. by F. W. Faber, vol. i.

of a religious fraternity of the Pilgrims and the Convaleſcents, ſtill famous in Rome, in the church of our Saviour Del-Campo, A. D. 1548. In 1551, he was ordained prieſt, being then thirty-ſix years of age; at which period he increaſed the number and ſeverity of his auſterities. It is affirmed, that while ſaying maſs and during his devotions his body uſed occaſionally to be elevated ſeveral yards high, and that a reſplendent cloud would cover him all over and transform the crimſon of his veſtments into a radiant whiteneſs, his face meanwhile emitting a fiery brilliancy.* He is alſo ſaid to have been

* We find the ſame authentically atteſted of many other ſervants of God. St. Ignatius of Loyola was ſometimes ſeen raiſed in prayer ſeveral feet above the ground; his body at the ſame time ſhining with light. The like elevations are related in the lives of St. Dominic, St. Dunſtan, St. Philip Beniti, St. Cajetan, St. Albert of Sicily, B. Bernard Ptolemæi, Inſtituter of the Congregation of our Lady of Mount Olivet, etc. etc. Many of the authors of theſe lives, perſons of undoubted veracity, teſtify that they were themſelves eye-witneſſes of this fact; others were ſo careful and diligent writers that their accounts cannot be doubted." Thus Trivet tells us that St. Richard, then chancellor to St. Edmund, archbiſhop of Canterbury, one day opening ſoftly the door ſaw his archbiſhop raiſed high in the air with his knees bent and his arms ſtretched out; but falling gently to the ground and ſeeing his chancellor he complained to him that he had hindered him of great ſpiritual delights and comfort. (Trivet. Annal. p. 73. ad. am.

gifted with the ſpirit of prophecy and miraculous diſcernment, ſo that he could penetrate the viſta of futurity, and diſcloſe the pent-up ſecrets of hearts. Several parties whom he named were afterwards elevated to the rank of cardinals and popes as he had predicted. Others were reſtored from ſickneſs to health, etc. And with reſpect to the ſins of private individuals, he particularly detected thoſe againſt chaſtity by the ſtench which the perpetrators thereof exhaled.*

Although the Congregation of the Oratory was begun in 1551, when Philip collected together ſome half-dozen diſciples from the higher ranks, yet this ſociety was not regularly eſtabliſhed until the year 1564. The name of the fraternity took its riſe from the chapel or oratory at San Girolamo, where the fathers uſed to preach, pray, hear con-

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1240.) Dom. Calmet, an author ſtill living, and a ſevere and learned critic, aſſures us that he knows a religious man who in devout prayer is ſometimes involuntarily raiſed in the air and remains hanging in it without any ſupport. (Calmet, Diſſ. ſur les Apparitions, ch. 21.) See in the Life of St. Thereſa, written by herſelf, how notwithſtanding her reſiſtance, her body ſometimes was raiſed from the ground. —*Note in Life of St. Philip Neri, by Alban Butler.*

* Acta Sanctorum Maii, tom. vi. cap. xxvii. (Vita ii. S. Philippi Nerii.) F. Bacci's Life, trans. by Father Faber, vol. i.

feſſions, and perform other religious duties. According to Baronius,* who entered the Congregation at eighteen years of age, and ſucceeded Philip as provincial, the ſpiritual exerciſes were as follows: When the community had aſſembled in the chapel, a ſhort time was firſt ſpent in mental prayer. Then Neri delivered a diſcourſe; after which ſome portion of a pious book was read, upon which paſſing comments were made. When the reading terminated, three of the fathers ſucceſſively aſcended the roſtrum, and each gave an addreſs which occupied half-an-hour in delivery, either upon church hiſtory, exegetical theology, or elſe ſome moral theſis, when the aſſembly broke up for the day.†

The ſociety which Philip Neri eſtabliſhed properly ſpeaking was not a religious order, but ſimply a body of *ſecular* prieſts, who although living, not neceſſarily however, in community, were unbound by vows or oaths like the members of *regular* houſes. The fathers, however, uſed one common purſe and table. Pope Gregory XIII. gave this order his approbation, A.D. 1577,‡

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* Created Cardinal in 1596, by Clement VIII.

† Annales Eccles. tom. i. p. 555.

‡ Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. iii. p. 278. (Soames.)

together with the newly built church of our Lady of Vallicella, of which poſſeſſion was taken in 1553. Philip lived to ſee numerous houſes of his order eſtabliſhed throughout Italy, and eſpecially in the Tuſcan ſtates. The Italian founder was cardinal Peter de Berulle.

Philip uſed to relate the annexed event concerning F. Zenobio de' Medici, and F. Servanzio Mini, prieſts of the oratory:— "Theſe two fathers had agreed together to hear each others' confeſſions every night before they went to matins, in order that they might ſay office with greater devotion. But the devil was enviou of ſo much good; and one night, about two hours before the uſual time, he knocked at the cell of Fra. Zenobio, ſaying, 'Up quickly, it is time.' At theſe words the good father woke, got up, and went as uſual into the church, where he found the devil in the form of Fra. Servanzio, walking near the confeſſional. Believing it was really his companion, he knelt down to confeſs, and the devil ſat down as if to hear the confeſſion, and at each fault which Fra. Zenobio named, he cried out, 'It is nothing, it is nothing.' At laſt the friar adding a fault which ſeemed to him of a ſomewhat more grave character, the devil

ſtill ſaid, 'It is nothing.' When Fra. Zenobio heard this form of ſpeech he bethought himſelf a little; and ſuſpecting, not without reaſon, ſome diabolical illuſion, he at once made the ſign of the croſs, ſaying, 'Perhaps you are a devil from hell;' at which words the evil ſpirit was confounded, and immediately diſappeared." *

It is recorded that at one time when St. Philip lay dangerouſly ill with a tertian fever, and his life was deſpaired of by his phyſicians, he was ſuddenly reſtored to health by an apparition of the Virgin Mary. While his medical attendants and others were in the ſick man's chamber momentarily expecting his death, they were ſuddenly ſtartled by hearing him vehemently exclaim: "*O Sanctiſſima Domina mea! O pulcherrima, et decora! O Domina mea benedicta!*" "Ah my Madonna, my beautiful Madonna, my bleſſed Madonna!" etc. Immediately the phyſician haſtened to his couch, drew aſide the curtains, and found their patient in an ecſtacy, with his hands lifted up towards heaven, his body elevated a foot above the bed, and apparently in the act of tenderly embracing ſome one, at the

* Bacci's Life of St. Philip Neri, trans. by F. W. Faber, vol. i.

ſame time ſaying: "*Non ſum dignus, non ſum dignus, Ecquis ego ſum, Domina mea dulciſſima, ut venias ad me?*" "Who am I, my dear Madonna, that you ſhould viſit me and take away my pain?" The ſpectators at this were aſtoniſhed, as well they might, while ſome of them could not refrain from ſhedding tears. Having come to himſelf, Philip explained to the phyſicians what had occurred to him, and then diſmiſſed them, obſerving, "I have no further need of your ſervices, for the Madonna has come and healed me." They then felt his pulſe, and were amazed to find that the fever had entirely left him. Next morning he aroſe perfectly cured. This is ſaid to have been atteſted upon oath by Galloni and the four phyſicians who were preſent.*

Early the following year (A.D. 1595) he was again attacked with fever, accompanied by hæmorrhage of the lungs. After ſome weeks of violent ſuffering, having received extreme unction from Baronius, and the viaticum from Cardinal Borromeo, he expired on the 26th May, as he had three years before predicted, being fourſcore and two years old.

* Galloni and Baccius, l. 4, c. ii. Acta Sanctorum, Maii, tom. vi. chap. xxxiii. (Vita S. Philippi Nerii.)

The very hour at which Philip died he is ſaid to have appeared to ſeveral nuns, and his biographers have taken the trouble to narrate even the converſations which took place on this occaſion. With one religious however, named Siſter Vittoria de' Maſſimi of the convent of St. Marta, who had been a penitent of his, he had rather a prolonged interview: "I have come," ſaid he, "to ſee you before I depart; and you muſt not lament at loſing me." The nun replied: "O my father, are you then going to heaven?" Then Philip ſhowed her a field full of thorns, ſaying, "If you deſire to come where I am going, you will have to paſs through this." At this the virgin began to weep and ſaid: "My father, I ſhall never ſee you more!"* A great concourſe of people, among whom were ſeveral cardinals, monks, and people of diſtinction, came to ſee his body when expoſed to view in the church, where ſeveral miracles are ſaid to have been wrought.

There is one circumſtance, however, worth recording. The evening following the expoſition in the church, when the phyſicians and ſurgeons were called in to a *poſt mortem* exami-

* Acta Sanctorum, Maii, tom. vi. cap. xxxiv. (Vita S. Philippi Nerii.)

nation in preſence of many fathers of the Congregation, in turning the body the deceaſed man with his own hands ſheltered and protected thoſe parts which modeſty uſually conceals, in the ſame way as a living perſon would, and the like occurred when the fathers were waſhing the body. Although the weather was ſultry no fœtid ſmell, as is uſual in ſuch caſes, was perceptible; and ſome of the byſtanders declared that it emitted a ſweet and agreeable odour. Upon opening the body the ſurgeons found that the ſwelling under his left breaſt was owing to his ribs being broken, and the ſkin projected to the bigneſs of a man's fiſt. The præcordia was healthy, the heart unuſually dilated, the great artery being twice its natural ſize. No water was diſcovered in the pericardium, and the ventricles of the heart contained no blood. From theſe *poſt mortem* appearances the medical attendants inferred that the ardour of Philip's contemplation muſt have been exceſſive. His heart and bowels were buried among the brethren of his order, while the body was placed in a coffin of cypreſs-wood and interred in a little chapel, the cardinal of Florence not deeming it expedient that he ſhould be laid in a common burial-ground. Seven years afterwards, A.D. 1602, one

Nerus de Nigris, a Florentine noble, built a magnificent chapel, and beautified with coſtly ornaments the church of the Oratory, to which the body of Philip was tranſlated with great pomp and ceremony. At the exhumation of the body it was found perfectly entire and incorrupt; when additional miracles were wrought at his tomb.* He was canonized by Gregory XV. A.D. 1622.

An inſtitute of St. Philip was eſtabliſhed in London ſome few years ago by Fathers Newman, Faber, and one or two other Oxford clergymen, who had embraced the Roman form of chriſtianity. At the time the Oratorians occaſioned a good deal of comment, and even merriment; for it was rather a novel ſight in England, but eſpecially in the metropolis, to obſerve the fathers and brothers in their long, monkiſh *ſoutanes* and broad-brimmed hats and "boy-like turn-down collars," parading the principal ſtreets; looking like the ghoſts of paſt ages in the ſun-light of our civilization! Several Congregations of the order have now been formed, of which the principal are in London and Birmingham.

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* Acta Sanctorum, Maii, tom. vi. cap. xxxv. (Vita S. Philippi Nerii.)

St. Philip is regarded as the repreſentative ſaint of modern times; and even Father Faber does not heſitate to aſſert that the antiquated idea of monaſticiſm has grown obſolete, needing a more vigorous, humane, and ſocial development. "If you read St. Bernard," he obſerves, "you will ſee that he ſeems to conſider even ſalvation difficult, but perfection a dream out of the cloiſter. This is the common language of the ſpiritual writers of the middle ages: the cloiſter means perfection; the world is not to be leavened, or attempted to be leavened; it is to be given up as an impracticable, hopeleſs buſineſs. If you love God, you muſt take to yourſelf the wings of a vacation, and fly away into the wilderneſs or the monaſtery. The church and the world were almoſt ſphered viſibly apart in thoſe times. *Look how different St. Philip is!* Perfection for all claſſes, in all ſtates of life, under every poſſible variety of circumſtances. This was the great leſſon he was commiſſioned to teach. Stay at home, keep as you are, mind your ſpinning, marry and ſettle, — theſe were houſehold phraſes with him; for all he loved the religious orders ſo much. Look at the heights of perfection to which he led people, and

yet how mild, it might be called *lax*, was the moral and aſcetical theology he taught! All has the indelible impreſs of the modern genius upon it. Look at his free manners! He uſed to make his meditation ſitting on a bench, and rocking to and fro, or lying on his bed; he uſed to hear confeſſions in bed; he ſet boys to play at 'fives' in the court-yard when they were wanting to go to confeſſion; and all this was in ſober earneſt, and meant ſomething. Is this like a picture of a mediæval ſaint?"* We moſt certainly anſwer *no*. And here I cannot but admire the genius and jeſuitry of that church which can thus become "all things to all men," and ſuit itſelf ſo admirably to the taſtes, temperaments, characters; nay, even prejudices and follies of all peoples and all times. The Oratorians, therefore, may be regarded as the Jeſuits of England, who have come among our proteſtant population with the expreſs view of proſelytiſing. Nor do they deny the purpoſe of their miſſion. Like the Jeſuits they practiſe moſt of their ſubtle artifices; but unlike them, they will not condeſcend to duplicity

* Spirit and Genius of St. Philip Neri. By F. W. Faber, Prieſt of the Oratory.

or ſecrecy. They tell us plainly that they have a work to do in this country among our toiling myriads and our poor neglected factory children. They have come, they tell us, "to play at double or quits with the devil;"* that proteſtantiſm is "naſcent," is, in fact, "behind its time," that "St. Philip's outward dreſs, no leſs than his hidden ſpirit, fits England to a nicety;" and that "if the land had been meaſured for him and for his Oratory the fit could not have been completer."† They inform us, moreover, that England's grand need at the preſent day is not an effective adminiſtration, or a national ſyſtem of education, a cricket-club, or a Victoria park, but—St. Philip and a ſociety of Oratorians!

But do theſe "miſſioners" expect ſucceſs? That they do. Hear Mr. Faber:— "If St. Philip can catch but *ſeven thouſand* men up and down the metropolis and the manufacturing towns, we ſhall have in England as great a number of the right kind of men as there were children of Iſrael, the ſtrength and leaven of the land, who in the bad times

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* Eſſay on Catholic Home Miſſions, by Father Faber.

† Spirit and Genius of St. Philip Neri, by Father Faber.

of Ahab had not bowed their knees before Baal. He can have but little confidence in St. Philip, who can deſpair of his doing *at leaſt this!*"* Again he informs us that the ſhepherdleſs youth of our overgrown towns is Philip's flock; that that flock will hear and know his voice, though having never heard or known it before, and gather together in peace and joy and gay liberty round the dear old ſaint. "One ſuch troop," he remarks, "of factory youths in a dozen large towns, and St. Philip's work will be worth England's having."† It is clear, therefore, that the Fathers of the Oratory are very ſanguine of their miſſion, and that they regard it as no idle dream or Quixotic labour. The ſame writer tells us that "there is a remarkable affinity between the Oratory and the Franciſcan order!" but I am inclined to the opinion that it approximates cloſer to the ſpirit and worldly craftineſs of the Jeſuit—that in fact its members are Jeſuits under a *nom déguiſé*. Indeed, it is not denied that the exchange of good offices and even inſtinctive ſympathy is reciprocal between the Company and the Oratory. Where the Jeſuits have been ex-

* Spirit and Genius of St. Philip Neri. † Ibid.

pelled, the Oratorians occupied the vacant ground. It was and is so in Spain, and I believe in Mexico; while in Florence the fathers are nicknamed the "consuls of the Jesuits," which order has long since been driven from that state.

As I have had but little opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with the *Exercises* of the Oratory, and as Father Faber states that "the best description of those used in England is that given by Blanco White in his Autobiography,"* I cannot do better than transcribe the account furnished by so excellent, forcible, and unsectarian a writer:—

"The system of these *Spiritual Exercises* is a masterpiece of church machinery .... As the persons arrived in the evening when the Exercises were to begin, they humbly kissed Father Vega's hand, and after the exchange of a few words, each was sent to the room which he was to inhabit. These rooms were generally double-bedded. Into them the whole company were distributed, usually in couples. But, according to the rules of the house, all conversation was forbidden between the inhabitants of the same room,

* Note in Essay on Catholic Home Missions.

technically called *companions*. Soon after this domeſtic arrangement was over, a large bell announced the firſt meeting in the chapel. That place was kept nearly dark. A lantern, cloſed on all ſides but one, threw its light on a ſtatue of Chriſt expiring on the croſs. As the object of the ſculptor was to ſtrike the ſenſes, without any regard to taſte, the ſtatue was as large as life, with glaſs eyes, and the body ſo coloured as to repreſent fleſh ſprinkled here and there with blood. After the congregation had taken their ſeats in profound ſilence, one of the aſſiſtant prieſts read the ſubject of *meditation*. This reading laſted half an hour. At the end of it all knelt. For about a quarter of an hour nothing was heard but the pendulum of the clock which was to meaſure a full hour for meditation. Aware, however, that moſt of his ſpiritual patients would loſe themſelves in reverie if left entirely to their own thoughts, Father Vega aſſiſted them with what in the language of aſceticiſm are called *ejaculations*. It ſeemed as if his thoughts, growing too big and vehement to be contained in his breaſt broke out in ſpite of himſelf. At firſt theſe were ſhort, and came at long intervals; but they gradually grew more frequent and longer; till, near the end of

the hour, and juſt before the congregation were allowed to riſe from their knees, the monotonous chant of the ejaculations was changed into agonizing ſcreams, accompanied with a loud ſmiting of the breaſt, in which the congregation joined, as they were moved; moſt of them repeating the words of the director, and loudly calling for mercy.

"But the effects of Father Vega's art were not ſeen in full force at the firſt meeting. He knew the human mind too well to attempt the application of a ſudden impulſe which might produce recoiling. As the ſame congregation were to remain under the operation of his ſpells till the tenth day after their entrance, he could operate at leiſure. During that time the *exercitants* were not allowed to go out of the houſe, nor to ſee their neareſt relations except for a few minutes, once or twice the whole time. The hour of riſing was five o'clock in the morning. The employment of the day conſiſted of three hours of meditation at different times: one hour of reading the life of a ſaint, to which all attended in chapel: and laſtly, juſt before ſupper and retiring to ſleep, an extempore ſermon by Father Vega, which laſted about an hour and a half.

" Nor was this ſtrict and uninterrupted diſcipline the only means employed to agitate and ſubdue the mind. There was a graduated ſcale of ſpiritual terrors, which, when raiſed to a certain pitch, made way to a gleam of affecting joy. The third day of the exerciſes was known to be the moſt terrific. The ſubject appointed for that day was the eternity of puniſhment. I cannot give an idea of the ingenuity employed in ſtriking the imagination by means of this awful ſubject. Whatever can be conceived to torture the body and agonize the ſoul, all was deſcribed in the moſt vivid colours. In the morning, the reading and meditation turned upon the conſignment of a wicked ſoul to hell. The howling of the evil ſpirits, as they celebrated their triumph; the firſt plunging of the wretched being into the flames; its cries of deſpair; its blaſphemies againſt heaven; the applauſe with which the moſt horrible expreſſions were received by the devil and his angels—all were given with ſhocking minuteneſs. The ejaculations of the director added touches of lurid light to the picture; and yet he would not conclude by imploring mercy. That word could not paſs his lips. His voice gradually ſunk, while ſighs and ſobs grew louder and louder around him. Perceiving

the moment when terror was at its higheſt he ſuddenly aſſumed a compoſed and almoſt familiar tone, aſſuring his hearers that under the preſent impreſſions of his mind, oppreſſed and ſinking as it was under the idea of ſin and its appropriate puniſhment, it was impoſſible for him to ſpeak of hope, of mercy, of forgiveneſs. He muſt, therefore, diſmiſs his hearers abruptly, and leave them to their own thoughts. He then clapped his hands, the uſual ſignal for departure, and retired into the veſtry. As the congregation croſſed the ſmall quadrangle before the chapel, on their way to their rooms, you might think you ſaw forty or fifty priſoners who had received ſentence of death the moment before. Some held their hands before their eyes, and ſcarcely could keep themſelves from crying aloud. Others looked down on the ground in the attitude of utter deſpair. All ſeemed abſorbed in grief.

" The ſcene was however, very different in the evening. The reading, preparatory to meditation, was of hope and mercy. The ejaculations opened in a tone of voice which ſoothed the heart, ſo lately harrowed with terror. A freſh flood of tears was now ſeen to flow from the eyes of the congregation; but they were tears of gratitude, of tender-

neſs, of love. A mere reaction of feeling might eaſily account for this change, but this reaction was not left to chance. The very aſpect of the chapel ſecured it. It was not a gloomy vault as before. There were wax candles upon the altar, amongſt which a ſmiling picture of the Virgin Mary ſeemed to greet the diſtreſſed penitents as they came in. The Virgin was indeed the principal, the all-engroſſing object of that evening. The director's addreſſes to her as the hour of meditation was waning, were thoſe of an enthuſiaſtic lover, wooing his ſovereign princeſs. In the midſt of theſe raptures, the ſound of muſic was heard from a gallery at the furtheſt end of the chapel. Several voices, accompanied by inſtruments of different kinds, ſang the praiſes of the Virgin, the 'Refuge of Sinners,' at the ſame time Father Vega roſe from his kneeling poſture and taking up the picture preſented it for a holy kiſs to every one preſent. The muſic was generally drowned in the convulſive cries of the congregation. This was the appointed time to begin the general confeſſions."* After ſimilar exerciſes,

* Life of the Rev. J. Blanco White, written by himſelf. Edit. by J. H. Thom. vol. i. pp. 38—42.

and when the appointed time had tranſpired, the congregation received the communion and ſet out for their reſpective homes.

The Society of Jeſus.

THOUGH laſt not leaſt, I proceed to notice that arrogant, crafty, imperious, dangerous aſſociation characteriſed, though moſt inappropriately, as the Society of Jeſus, in portraying whoſe hiſtory many gifted pens have been employed; of whom the nations of the world have unfortunately known ſo much and yet underſtood ſo little; which cauſed the formidable Philip II. to ſay, "Of all the religious orders that of the Jeſuits is the only one which I cannot in the leaſt comprehend!" It is really marvellous to conceive how any religious aſſociation of men could have attained to ſuch influence, diſtinction, and authority, as virtually to guide the deſtinies of empires and wield the ſceptre of the world. This the Company did until the order became alike the terror of civilized and ſemi-barbarous nations:—

> "Black it ſtood as night—
> Fierce as ten furies—terrible as hell!"

"There is not," remarks the hiſtorian,* "in the annals of mankind any example of ſuch a perfect deſpotiſm exerciſed not over monks ſhut up in the cells of a convent, but over men diſperſed among all the nations of the earth."

And here it will be neceſſary, in conformity with the plan already adopted, to give a brief ſketch of the founder of this celebrated and extraordinary ſociety.

Ignatius Loyola, the youngeſt ſcion of a noble houſe, was born at the caſtle of Loyola, in the diſtrict of Guipuſcoa, in Biſcay, Spain, A.D. 1491. Although bred up in luxury, ignorance† and vice at the palace of Ferdinand V., whoſe page he was, our young knight manifeſted an inclination for a life of action and valour not to be gratified in royal courts. Fired with the ſpirit of chivalry, panting after fame, and excited by brilliant pictures of legendary romance, he embraced the profeſſion of a ſoldier,‡ after the example of his elder brothers, and dreamed delightedly of "war's alarums," hazardous adventures, valorous feats—

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* Robertſon.

† Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. iii. p. 266. (Soames.)

‡ Acta Sanctorum, Julii, tom. vii. § III. (Vita S. Ignatio Loyola, Conf.)

> " Races and games
> Or tilting furniture, emblazoned ſhields,
> Impreſſes quaint, capariſons and ſteeds,
> Baſes and tinſel trappings, gorgeous knights,
> At jouſt and tournament."

But the age of chivalry was gone when Boabdil ſurrendered Albayzin and Alhambra, and yielded up the keys of Granada to the Spaniſh ſovereigns. Conſequently Ignatius was born in an epoch not only unfortunate for himſelf but for the world.

In the year 1521, when Francis I. ſent a powerful army into Spain, and the invading forces beſieged Pampeluna, the capital of Navarre, Loyola, who had been left there by the viceroy not to command but to encourage the garriſon, urged the beſieged not to capitulate. They did ſo, however, and opened the gates to the enemy. In order to maintain his own honour Loyola retired, with a ſolitary ſoldier who had the heart to follow him, into the citadel. Here the garriſon likewiſe deliberated upon ſurrendering, but he earneſtly beſeeched them to ſtand their ground. Meanwhile the French ſoldiers attacked the place with great fury, when a breach was opened, to which Loyola quickly ruſhed, ſword in hand, along with the braveſt

of his little band, to drive back the beſiegers. A ſhot from a cannon, however, cauſed him to fall dangerouſly wounded, his left leg being bruiſed by a ſplinter of ſtone, and his right leg broken and ſhivered by the ball itſelf. Upon ſeeing their leader ſtruck down, the garriſon ſurrendered at diſcretion.*

Ignatius met with conſiderable attention and kind treatment at the hands of the victors, who had him conveyed to the general's quarters, and ſubſequently removed him, in a litter carried by two men, to the caſtle of Loyola, not far diſtant. Here his ſurgical attendants informed him that, owing to the bones having been badly ſet in the firſt inſtance, combined with the ill effects of the jolting he had ſuſtained during the journey, it was neceſſary that the leg ſhould be broken anew—an operation to which he ſubmitted without a groan or even a murmur. A violent fever enſued, which had very nearly proved fatal. Indeed his life was deſpaired of; and it was by the mereſt chance that he recovered. His reſtoration to health is thus accounted for. One night when his death was momentarily

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* Acta Sanctorum, Julii, tom. vii. § iii. (Vita S. Ignatio Loyola, Conf.) Bonhour's La Vie de S. Ignace.

expected he had a dream, in which St. Peter, to whom he was particularly devoted and once compoſed a poem in his praiſe, appeared to him and cured him with his own hand. Upon waking he found himſelf out of danger, his pain left him and his ſtrength returned; "which event," ſays his French biographer, "ſhows that this dream was no illuſion."* The miracle at all events wrought no ſalutary change in his heart or diſpoſition, for he was ſtill as worldly, vain, and choleric as ever. The re-ſetting of his leg happened to leave an unſightly deformity behind, as the end of a bone projected from under his knee. This protuberance he compelled the ſurgeons to ſaw away; and during the dreadful operation he would neither ſuffer himſelf to be bound or held, and ſcarce evinced the ſlighteſt diſcompoſure under the painful ordeal. His only object in having recourſe to ſuch an alternative was ſimply the gratification of his exceſſive vanity, and in order that the elegance of his boot and ſtocking might not be marred.† The limb being contracted

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* Bonhour's La Vie de S. Ignace.

† Bonhour's Ibid. Butler's Lives of the Saints, vol. vii. (St. Ignatius.)

he had it ſtretched by a machine of iron, and for ſeveral days he would remain upon a kind of rack in exceſſive agony, violently endeavouring to lengthen it. But all thoſe torturous efforts proved unavailing, and he remained a cripple for life.

Pending the cure of his knee he was confined to bed; and in order to relieve his turpid and troubled fancy he aſked for a book of romances, as his literary taſtes prediſpoſed him to admire works of knight-errantry. The caſtle of Loyola not being able to furniſh what he deſired, the lives of the ſaints and a life of Chriſt was brought him inſtead. He peruſed theſe books at firſt merely as a paſtime; but afterwards he betook him ſeriouſly to their ſtudy. Having conſidered the example of the ancient hermits who forſook human habitations and buried themſelves alive in dens and caves, where they led abſtemious and rigorous lives, he ſaid within himſelf, "Theſe men were of the ſame frame as I; why then ſhould not I do what they have done?" He almoſt immediately thought of making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and becoming a hermit, but his exceſſive worldlineſs, and an *amour* which he had formed for a rich Caſtilian lady, made him

vacillate in his resolution until he had again taken up the extraordinary book which finally worked his conversion, and caused all vicissitude and fluctuation of mind to depart. He even then began to practise some of the austerities of those heroes whose histories he studied—treated his body with excessive rigour—practised midnight vigils—and wept tears of compunction for hours in succession.* This was the turning point in his life—an eventful one as everybody knows; one, moreover, which has peculiarly verified the saying of Voltaire: "Would you gain a great name be completely mad: but of a madness befitting the age. Have in your folly a bottom of reason to guide your ravings, and be excessively stubborn. It may chance that you get hanged; but if you are not you may have an altar!" †

He now began to see visions and hear noises. His already heated imagination became additionally inflamed upon the perusal of the biographies of such fanatics as Anthony and Paul. Devils tormented him and shook the apartment which he inhabited, until the

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* Butler's Lives of the Saints. (St. Ignatius.) Vol. vii.

† Dict. Philosoph. tom. x. Ignace.

windows were broken and a rent was made in the wall, which remains to this day, ſays the lateſt writer of his life.* Another time the Virgin appeared to him environed with light, holding the infant Jeſus in her arms; which viſion filled his ſoul with infinite pleaſure and rendered earthly objects inſipid to him ever after.

Fired with the chivalric idea of becoming a ſaint outright Ignatius quitted the caſtle of Loyola, on pretence that he was about to viſit the duke of Najara, who during his convaleſcence had frequently come to ſee him; ſent back his ſervants upon arriving at a certain road, and betook himſelf to the Benedictine monaſtery of Montſerrat, a place then very famous. Before preſenting himſelf to the abbot, he purchaſed in the town a long coarſe garment, a girdle, ſandals, a wallet, and a ſtaff, intending a pilgrimage to Jeruſalem as ſoon as he had finiſhed his devotions in the chapel of the Benedictines. Having attired himſelf in theſe ſtrange habiliments, he gave his rich clothing to a beggar, who afterwards was impriſoned on ſuſpicion of having ſtolen the ſame. Ignatius then

* Butler's Lives of the Saints, vol. VII. (St. Ignatius.)

proceeded to the monaſtery and had an interview with the abbot Chanones, to whom he unboſomed his heart and narrated the plan of auſterities which he propoſed to practiſe. The venerable monk encouraged the young ſaint, and after a ſojourn of three days in the cloiſter, during which time he made a general confeſſion of his ſins to the abbot, he vowed perpetual chaſtity, dedicated himſelf to heaven and the Virgin, gave his horſe to the monaſtery, and, like a true knight, hung his ſword on a pillar by the altar, in teſtimony of his unalterable devotion to the cauſe he had embraced.*

He next journeyed bare-headed and with one foot bare, the other being yet tender, to the hoſpital of Manreſa, ſome three leagues diſtant from Montſerrat. He entered here unknown, being in the diſguiſe of a poor pilgrim. His only food now was bread and water, which he begged. On Sundays he extended his repaſt by adding a few herbs which he firſt ſprinkled with aſhes. He lay on the ground, ſlept little, wore an iron girdle and a hair ſhirt, and every day ſpent

* Acta Sanctorum, Julii, tom. VII. § 4. (Vita S. Ignatio Loyola.) Bonhour's La Vie de S. Ignace.

ſeven hours on his knees. In addition to theſe mortifications he affected to be a clown, went begging about the ſtreets, his face ſmeared with filth, his hair diſhevelled, and his beard and nails grown out to a frightful length, the very model of the fated Nebuchadnezzar! Children uſed to throw ſtones at him,—and no wonder!—and ſhout after him ſcornfully as he paſſed along. Yet ſo far from being any way annoyed at theſe contumelies, he rather courted and rejoiced in them. Afterwards he ſecreted himſelf in a dark deep ravine covered with thorns, half a mile from the town, called the Vale of Paradiſe, where by ſheer accident he was diſcovered almoſt dead, and taken back to the hoſpital.

The workings of his morbid imagination had induced acute hypochondriaſes, which diſciplines and long faſtings tended rather to aggravate than diminiſh; although as Coleridge ſays, "A man who is full of inward heavineſs, the more he is encompaſſed about with mirth, it exaſperates and enrages his grief the more; like ineffectual weak phyſic, which removes not the humour, but ſtirs it and makes it more unquiet."* Ignatius,

* Aids to Reflection, Aphoriſm x. (Moral and Religious.)

however, found no nepenthe, no cordial able to act upon his agitated fancy, which already rendered him miserable through religious scrupulosity, and was fast hurrying him to the brink of despair. The Dominican monks, who compassionated his condition, received him out of charity into their convent at Manresa, where his mental disorders reached a crisis. Finally, he became the subject of heavenly raptures, when his malady departed; and the secrets of the divine mysteries, especially that of the Trinity, were fully revealed to him. But the supernatural knowledge which he acquired during his long ravishments was only made known to the pious abbot of Montserrat and the Dominican of Manresa.* This remarkable wisdom certainly presents a striking contrast to the gross ignorance of moral duties which he displayed when he set out on his journey to the shrine of the Benedictine monastery; and when having met with a poor Moresco, or Mahometan, who spoke contemptuously of the Virgin, deliberated within himself whether, being a soldier, he was not justified

* Acta Sanctorum, Julii, tom. VII. § v. (De S. Ignatio Loyola, Conf.)

in taking the blaſphemer's life. The ſolution of this moral problem he left to fate to decide by dropping his horſe's bridle, being determined, ſhould the horſe turn round, to perpetrate the dread deed. The animal, happening to be more merciful than its maſter, purſue the onward road, and thus ſaved the life of human creature!

Loyola next ſet about compoſing his Spiritual Exerciſes, which he ſubſequently publiſhed in Rome in 1548. This extraordinary compoſition produced ſevere criticiſms in ſome quarters, and poſitive fault was found with it. To remedy this, Francis Borgia prevailed on pope Paul III. to give the work his approbation, which was accordingly done in a brief iſſued during the ſame year.

The authorſhip of the Exerciſes has given riſe to much controverſy. Cajetan, the Benedictine, affirms this book to have been written by Garcias Ciſneros, the abbot of Montſerrat; a circumſtance not at all improbable, conſidering the intimacy and confidence which exiſted between the monk and his young diſciple. Even Alban Butler admits, that Ignatius "had no tincture of learning." How, then, could he poſſibly have compoſed ſo elaborate a work? How-

ever, his biographers labour strenuously to refute all such charges, and claim for Loyola the honour of the production.*

After the plague which visited Italy had abated, Ignatius set out from Manresa on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Having met with a ship at Venice, to which port he had travelled on foot, bound for Cyprus, he embarked. During the voyage he so enraged the sailors by his ill-timed reproofs, that they conspired to set him ashore upon a desert island; but a sudden gust of wind fortunately prevented the ship from touching upon it, thereby frustrating their machinations. After landing at Cyprus he set sail for Joppa, August 1523, in company with several others bent on a similar mission. From thence he journeyed to Jerusalem, and arrived there in four days. He was then seized with the idea of converting the Mahometans, but the provincial of the Franciscans, by virtue of his authority held from the pope, ordered him to quit Palestine without delay. Ignatius obeyed the harsh mandate; but stole privately back

* *Vide* Acta Sanctorum, Julii, tom. vii. § vi. (De S. Ignatio Loyola, Conf.) Bonhour's La Vie de S. Ignace.

to Mount Olivet, in order to ſatisfy his devotion by kiſſing the foot-prints of the Saviour's feet!

At the beginning of the year 1524, he returned to Venice, and from thence journeyed on foot to Barcelona. Here he thought of becoming an eccleſiaſtic, and in order to qualify himſelf for the ſacred office, entered upon "the purſuit of knowledge under difficulties." In fine, he began the ſtudy of grammar at the age of three-and-thirty, under the tuition of one Jerome Ardebal, in the mean time ſubſiſting by the charities of a benevolent lady named Iſabel Roſella. In this new and, to him, particularly dry ſtudy, he made little or, more truly, no progreſs. So full was his mind of the divine that he could not be brought to learn any ſecular ſcience. For example, when conjugating the verb *Amo*, *I love*, he could only repeat, "I love God," or, "I am loved by God!" Likewiſe at the univerſity of Alcala, where he attended lectures upon logic and divinity, his "confuſion became worſe confounded;" for the multiplicity of ſcientific terms which he heard ſo turned his brain into a ſort of chaos, that he verily learned nothing at all, although he ſtudied laborioufly day and night. His ex-

ceſſive ſtupidity became ſo notorious that the little boys, his ſchool-fellows, uſed to laugh and jeer at him for his ignorance, but their taunts he received with joy. Butler relates, that once "hearing that a poor man called Laſano had hanged himſelf on a beam in his chamber, he ran to him, cut the rope, and prayed by him till the man returned to himſelf, though he had before ſeemed perfectly dead to all byſtanders. Laſano made his confeſſion, received the ſacraments, and ſoon after expired. This fact was atteſted in the city as miraculous."*

At Alcala, Ignatius was accuſed before the biſhop's grand-vicar of having taught hereſy, and was ſentenced to forty-two days' ſolitary impriſonment; although his diſcourſes are ſaid to have converted a number of looſe livers, and among the reſt, one of the moſt wealthy prelates in Spain. Driven about and finding no reſt, like the fated Oreſtes purſued by the Furies, he arrived at Paris in February, 1528. In this city he ſpent two years learning Latin and graduating in philoſophy. Firſt of all he took up his abode in Montaigne college, but ſome one having

* Lives of the Saints, vol. vii. (S. Ignatius, C.)

robbed him of his effects, he removed to the hoſpital of St. James, and ſubſiſted by beggary. Once he came to England, during the vacation, to obtain contributions from the Spaniſh merchants ſettled there. At the college of St. Barbara he had very narrowly eſcaped a public whipping from all the inmates, as the principal thought his aſcetic piety, and his religious tutelage of ſome of the ſcholars, interfered with their proficiency in learning. At the ſound of a bell the whole college aſſembled in the hall, with rods in their hands, to ſcourge this "corrupter of youth," who had been condemned to ſuch ſignal chaſtiſement. When the principal appeared in the hall, and the ſtudents ſtood ready for action, awaiting but the word of command, they were amazed to find Govea, ſo far from ordering flagellation, caſt himſelf at the feet of Ignatius. Then riſing he pronounced him a ſaint! This humiliating act of reparation was not without its effect. Several of his fellow-ſtudents became attached to him and his exerciſes, and even the profeſſors uſed occaſionally to aſk his advice on difficult ſubjects.

At the Dominican convent, to which Ignatius repaired to ſtudy theology, he made

several conquests, among the most remarkable of whom was the famous Francis Xavier, who afterwards occupied no mean post in the society which Ignatius originated. The strange methods by which he sought to reclaim dissolute persons are not the least remarkable incidents in his wonderful career. Upon one occasion, when he found a young man engaged in illicit commerce with a woman of the city, he stood in a frozen pond up to his neck; and as the delinquent passed by in the night, Ignatius cried out to him: "Whither art thou going? Dost thou not hear the thunder of Divine justice over thy head, ready to break upon thee? Go then; satisfy thy brutish passion: here I will suffer for thee to appease heaven!" The lewd young man became first affrighted, then penitent, and afterwards altered his life.

Ignatius, with his companions Le Fevre, Xavier, Laynez, and a few others, numerically not exceeding nine, formed the nucleus from which this colossal society sprung. Having partaken of the sacrament in the subterranean chapel of Montmartre, each audibly pronounced a vow to renounce the world and preach christianity in Palestine, or if this proved impracticable, to offer

themſelves and their ſervices to the pope, to be diſpoſed of at his pleaſure. Theſe men, although of different nations, habits, diſpoſitions, and attainments, coaleſced notwithſtanding, and blindly devoted themſelves body and ſoul to their maſter Loyola, who afterwards enjoined his diſciples to adopt the cognomen of the Society of Jeſus.

Shortly afterwards, the Venetians declared war againſt the Turks; ſo that the darling project of Loyola became in conſequence hopeleſſly fruſtrated. He accordingly ſet out ſingly for Rome to caſt himſelf at the feet of the pope, as he had ſolemnly promiſed ſhould anything occur to interrupt his plans. On the road, and while Ignatius was praying in a little oratory, he fell into a rapture, during which he ſaw the eternal Father preſenting him (Ignatius) to his Son, who bore on his ſhoulder a heavy croſs, and ſhone with inexpreſſible luſtre. Addreſſing himſelf to Ignatius, he ſweetly ſaid: "*Ego vobis Romæ propitius ero.*" "I will be favourable to thee at Rome!"* This viſion Ignatius made known to his followers, who became

* Bonhour's La Vie de S. Ignace.

inſpired with greater confidence in the ſucceſs of their leader's miſſion.

Paul III. received Ignatius very graciouſly, and rather encouraged his project than otherwiſe. Upon this he ſummoned his diſciples from Vicenza to the holy city. They ſhortly followed and formed themſelves into a religious order. The pope directed three cardinals to examine the merits of the application made to him. Theſe at firſt pronounced in oppoſition to it, but were induced ſuddenly—by a miracle of courſe! —to alter their opinion. The pope then admitted into holy orders all thoſe who were not prieſts, and iſſued a bull of conſtitution for the Society dated the 27th of September, 1540. This bull, however, was embarraſſed by ſome diſagreeable reſtrictions, one of which was that the number of the profeſſed ſhould be limited to ſixty. Three years after, A. D. 1543, theſe reſtrictions were aboliſhed by another papal mandate, when Ignatius was appointed general. The famous Conſtitutions were next framed, ſome affirm by Ignatius himſelf, for which Paſquier pronounced him "one of the moſt ſubtle and ſkilful politicians which his age produced." Others, however, among whom are writers

of authority, deny his title to the compoſition,* although for two hundred years the world had not heard of it. The Society ſoon afterwards wonderfully augmented in power, affluence, and popularity. In leſs than half a century its profeſſed members exceeded ten thouſand. A century later found it increaſed to twenty thouſand, and ſeveral hundred colleges. Although the members of the Society ſpread themſelves over the world, yet Ignatius continued to reſide at Rome until his death, which took place on

* Not only proteſtants, but alſo many Roman catholics, and they men of learning and diſcrimination, deny that Loyola had learning enough to compoſe the writings aſcribed to him, or genius enough to form ſuch a ſociety as originated from him. On the contrary, they ſay, that ſome very wiſe and extraordinary men guided and controlled his mind; and that better educated men than he compoſed the works which bear his name. See Mich. Geddes, *Miſcellaneous Tracts*, vol. iii. p. 429. Moſt of his writings are ſuppoſed to have been produced by John de Palanco, his ſecretary. See M. V. la Croze *Hiſtoire du Chriſt, d'Ethiopie*, pp. 55, 271. His Spiritual Exerciſes (*Exercitia Spiritualia*), the Benedictines ſay, were tranſcribed from the work of a Spaniſh Benedictine, whoſe name was Ciſneros. See Jordan, *Vie de M. La Croze*, p. 83. The conſtitutions of the ſociety, it is ſaid, were drawn up by Lainez and Salmeron, learned men among his firſt aſſociates. See *Hiſtoire de la Compagnie de Jéſus*, tom. i. p. 115.—*Note* in Moſh. Eccleſ. Hiſt. vol. iii. p. 268. (Soames.)

the 31st of July, 1556, when his Company numbered over one thousand persons. He was beatified by Paul V. A. D. 1609; and finally canonized by Gregory XV. A. D. 1622. Thus arose the Society of Jesus; an order that although fanned into being by one pope, yet had to be suppressed by another,* when the crowned heads of Europe, emperors of Asia, chieftains of Africa, and commonwealths of America, conjointly united in its condemnation. But as a modern writer wisely remarks: "The pope had suppressed the Society, but the Jesuits would never be suppressed. Expelled from their strongholds they soon threw up other entrenchments—as the terrible angel driven out of heaven flung himself into the Eden of the earth, where he quickly found a footing."†

As it would be preposterous to attempt giving anything like even a condensed history of this singular society within our necessarily circumscribed limits, I must accordingly content myself (and so I trust will the reader) with the account of the rise and establishment of the

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* Clement XIV. July, A.D. 1773.

† The Novitiate, or the Jesuit in Training, by A. Steinmitz.

order, which I have already furniſhed; at the ſame time referring thoſe who ſeek further information as to the ſubſequent workings of that famous body, to Mr. Steinmitz's *Hiſtory of the Jeſuits;* a work of the moſt talented and intereſting kind. It may not however be out of place juſt to record the reproach caſt upon the Society by Clement VIII. in 1692—a pontiff who perſonally preſided at a general chapter of the order. "Curioſity," he obſerves, "induces them to intrude everywhere, and chiefly into the confeſſionals, that they may aſcertain from their penitent whatever occurs in his home, among the children, the domeſtics, and the other inmates or viſitors of the houſe, and even all that is occurring in the neighbourhood. If they confeſs a prince they contrive to govern his whole family; they endeavour even to govern his ſtates by inſpiring him with the idea that nothing can go well without their overſight and direction."* Really, upon reviewing the many fearful and fiery ordeals through which the Company has paſſed, there appears ſome force in what its founder ſaid: "Being begun by God the Society muſt be preſerved by divine

* Théâtre Jéſuitique, p. ii. 4.

and not human means."* "*Ad majorem Dei gloriam*" is a principle which, in the hands of the Jesuits, have been the bane and curse of nations.

The Jesuits have several institutes or colleges in this and the sister isle; the most flourishing of which are Clongowes, near Dublin, and Stonyhurst in Lancashire. The latter was presented to the Jesuits by Thomas Weld, of Lulworth, who as an additional benefaction gave his son to the Society. The Jesuits made considerable additions to the property by building three establishments, viz., the house of Probation, the Seminary, and the house for the Professed. Besides these a magnificent church has been erected —the whole beautified and enhanced by a charming demesne of some thousand acres of excellent land.† A new and splendid church has lately been completed in the metropolis; so it would appear that the clauses in the Catholic Relief Bill of 1829, which contains some provisions for the gradual extinction of Jesuitism in this land, have remained literally a *dead letter*. "Wherever the Jesuits are

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* Const. Lec. 1. p. 61.

† *Vide* The Novitiate; etc., by A. Steinmitz.

admitted," ſaid the emperor Napoleon, "they will be maſters, coſt what it may."*

Internal Diſcipline of Religious Houſes.

THE rules relating to diſcipline are pretty much alike in all conventual eſtabliſhments, with the exception of thoſe of the Ciſtercian and Oratorian orders previouſly deſcribed. From the following ſuccinct account, the reader will be able to form a tolerably accurate conception of the daily monotonous routine of monaſtic duties :—

The "religious" are ſummoned throughout the year at 5 A.M. to their diurnal exerciſes, by the ringing of a large bell, the ſound of which not only diſtinctly reverberates along the corridors of the cloiſter, but too often diſturbs the adjoining neighbourhood, and proves a ſource of annoyance to the inhabitants, who do not like their vigils to be thus ſummarily interrupted by the harſh "ding-dong" of "the convent bell." In the dormitory there is an alarum-clock, which is ſet over-night, and entruſted to the junior novice, who has to be

* Récits de la captivité de l'Emp. Napol. à Sainte Hélène, par M. le Général Montholon.

up a quarter of an hour before the reſt of the community. Upon the firſt ſound of the bell each one riſes, and after dreſſing proceeds to the domeſtic chapel. During the winter ſeaſon there is ſome little inconvenience experienced as no lights are allowed. Five minutes after the bell rings the community are expected to be in their proper places, when the exerciſes open with a meditation, which laſts nearly an hour. The ſubject of the meditation continually varies, and is conducted thus. The ſuperior generally, or his deputy, reads in an audible voice ſome ſentence out of a book, which is preſumed to be ſilently reflected upon for a quarter of an hour, although one has occaſionally a terrible combat with Morpheus, who too often becomes the victor! Another ſentence is then repeated; and ſo on until the expiration of the allotted period, the religious kneeling and ſitting alternately. At ſix o'clock the "*Angelus Domini*" is ſaid, the large bell being kept ringing the while. Then begins the "office" of the church,* which occupies about thirty minutes, when the devotions are for a while interrupted. The community then retire

* The Jeſuits are relieved from the obligation of repeating the daily office.

to their reſpective cells, and the novices to their dormitory, when the proceſs of dreſſing commences. During the ablution no part of the dreſs is removed, it being conſidered repugnant to modeſty to act otherwiſe. The religious next hear maſs, which is celebrated by the chaplain either in the domeſtic chapel, in the church adjoining, or elſe in a contiguous place of worſhip. The remaining portion of the morning is occupied in ſtudy, ſhort religious exerciſes, and breakfaſt. During meals the ſtricteſt ſilence is obſerved; but in order to relieve the *tedium* which would otherwiſe exiſt, one of the novices reads a portion of ſome book aſſigned by the ſuperior. The remainder part of the day, until evening, is paſſed in the performance of duties peculiar to each religious ſodality. The "brothers" and "ſiſters" of moſt communities have the care of ſchools, and the inſtruction of adults, while other orders are devoted to external employments, ſuch as viſiting and attending the ſick, etc. And really, although I regard the monaſtic ſyſtem as highly reprehenſible, yet I cannot but admire the moral heroiſm of thoſe unaſſuming women, many of whom forſake not only the comforts but the refinements and elegances of life, for

the hard pillow, the cheerless chamber, the frugal table, the plain attire, the stringent rule, to soothe the pangs of suffering—administer help to the destitute—perform the meanest offices for the sick—and pour the oil of joy into the mourner's bosom. Who that has observed the nuns performing their voluntary offices of mercy, and contrasted them with the paid "sisters" of our hospitals, but has been struck with the mild, affable, gentle, loving spirit of the one, with the harsh, severe, unwilling, unfeeling manner of the other? And here I cannot refrain from paying a passing tribute of respect to our own Miss Nightingale, whose chivalrous self-sacrifice, noble spirit of endurance, and devotion to works of charity, deserve our highest commendation, and shall for ever render her name emblazoned on her country's annals.

But to resume. Two hours each day are set apart for what is termed "recreation;" and certainly such an arrangement is most beneficial, as it renders the *ennui* and solitariness of the cloister more supportable and, physiologically speaking, less injurious. There are special exercises for every hour; so that such a thing as leisure is practically unknown. At 9 P.M. the entire community assemble for

prayers—the profeſſed in the domeſtic chapel —the novices in their oratory—after which confeſſions are publicly made of breaches of rule, the religious in turn proſtrating themſelves in the middle of the chapel; and upon begging for and receiving ſuitable penance, kiſs the floor in token of their acquieſcence and humility. Should they happen through overſight or otherwiſe to neglect manifeſting their conſcience, there is generally ſome perſon preſent to make the imputation, as each one is continually watched by the other with ſcrupulous exactneſs; and as individuals can ſee the faults of others better than their own, this peculiarity is taken into account and employed with advantage. At ten o'clock the community muſt be in bed, when all lights are extinguiſhed; and in order to guard againſt any innovation in this reſpect, a party goes to the door of each cell, which is never ſuffered to be cloſed, and cries "*Benedicamus Domino.*" This general ſalutation immediately meets with the reſponſe "*Deo gratias*," from the individual within.

The regulations pertaining to novices are much more preciſe and rigorous than thoſe laid down for the guidance of the profeſſed. The former are not permitted to mingle or

converſe with the latter, nor even (if the community be not what is called incloſed) to occupy the ſame footway when outſide the precincts of the cloiſter. On firſt entering into the inſtitute the ſubject is embraced by the novices, and conducted to the apartments termed the "noviciate." After the expiration of a few days a "retreat" is entered upon, which laſts twenty or thirty days together, during which tireſome period the ſtricteſt ſilence is impoſed. Human nature is ſcarcely proof againſt the pſychological and phyſical evils reſulting from ſo unremitting a courſe of mental exerciſes as is aſſigned to poſtulants during this and ſucceeding ſeaſons of trial, by the director of novices, who keeps a watchful and ſcrutiniſing eye upon all their actions.

I well remember upon firſt entering the convent being conducted to the noviciate by the maſter of novices, a grave, ſtrict, but withal kind-hearted man, when my attention was directed to a ſtatue of the Virgin, compoſed of plaſter-of-Paris, which ſtood upon a ſmall altar at the extremity of the corridor. Fully cogniſant of the diſtreſſing circumſtances under which I had deſerted the maternal roof—for I conſidered it a pious ſeverity and a poſitive duty to keep my mother

ignorant of the raſh ſtep I had taken*—my ſpiritual director, in the moſt ſolemn and impreſſive manner, thus addreſſed me:—"You have, my dear young brother, voluntarily ſeparated yourſelf from your deareſt connections, cloſed all avenues to diſtinction and emolument which the great world opens up to talent, effort, and perſeverance; and with a heroiſm praiſeworthy and even meritorious, have cut aſunder even the ſtrong ties of blood. But you have made a profitable exchange in forſaking an earthly for a heavenly parent." Then, pointing to the figure, he exclaimed: "Behold your mother now! Her affection towards you will never become alienated or abated; and if you but prove yourſelf a faithful imitator of her virtuous and angelic life, ſhe will finally conduct you to glory!" I have frequently obſerved the novices in the warmth and enthuſiaſm of their devotion, kiſs with intenſe ardour the feet of this image of clay; and none either paſſed or repaſſed without making obeiſance to the Madonna.

* Si currerint tibi Pater et Mater ingreſſuro Monaſterium, et monſtraverint ubera et lacrymis ſuis te voluerint retrahere, contemne lacrymas, et conculca pedibus parentes, nuduſque fuge ad crucem Chriſti.—*Vox Hieronimi; impia hæc et diabolica vox Lutherus.*

I can truly ſay with Melancthon; "I ſhudder when I think of the honour which I paid to images when I was in the papacy."*

After the expiration of a few months the poſtulant receives the "habit" of his order, when an impoſing and *ad captandum* ceremony attends its reception. On this occaſion, ſtrange to ſay, he renounces the name conferred at baptiſm, and aſſumes that of ſome ſaint, under the direction of the maſter, by which he is afterwards deſignated. It is a common occurrence for men to take women's names, and *vice verſâ*. The monks having in heaven the Virgin Mary, the image of a woman—an image of love—can perhaps more eaſily diſpenſe with *real* women; and juſt in proportion as the *ideal* increaſes in intenſity. The nuns, on the other hand, have in St. Joſeph an object of *ideal* love, which ſupplies the natural craving after the *human* love. Mr. Steinmitz† alludes to this important pſychological fact—a fact, however, by no means incomprehenſible, but perfectly intelligible to thoſe who are acquainted with the philoſophy of the human mind.

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* Cohorreſco quando cogito quomodo ipſe acceſſerim ad ſtatum in papatu.—*Explicat. Evang.*

† *Vide* The Noviciate; or a Year with the Engliſh Jeſuits.

Strict diſcipline regulates every movement of the young diſciples. They are ſeldom permitted to go beyond the precincts of their gloomy dwelling; and even when this privilege is extended, they are invariably accompanied by a profeſſed brother, though generally by the party to whom the reſponſibility of their training is entruſted. During the probationary term, which is uſually about two years, the novices are occaſionally obliged to perform menial offices, ſuch as cleaning their own ſhoes, duſting the windows, ſweeping the reception-rooms, weeding the garden, etc., in order to exerciſe them in humility and ſelf-denial. A neglect of the duty impoſed upon them would ſubject the offenders to the mortification of taking their meals kneeling—a puniſhment to which I was once ſubjected—or to ſome other penitential act. Habitual diſobedience would either diſqualify for profeſſion, or elſe procure expulſion from the inſtitute. "In a convent in the United States," obſerves Cobbin, "the inmates, for ſlight acts of diſobedience, were ſubjected to many auſtere penances, as remaining proſtrate for a length of time, making the ſign of the croſs on the floor with the tongue, eating a cruſt of bread for the morning's 'portion,'

kissing the floor, kneeling for a considerable time, and other similar degradations."*

The novices are seldom permitted to have interviews, or enter into correspondence, with their nearest relatives; nor are they suffered to receive letters, unless such epistolary communications be first submitted to the strict *surveillance* of the superior. Not infrequently such correspondence is not only Grahamised, but positively suppressed. Any intercourse with seculars, be they even one's parents, is considered most prejudical to the religious state. "A religious," writes Liguori, "must know, that he cannot write to his parents or friends without the permission of the superior, nor without showing him the letters. To omit this would be a great fault, and one could not be excused, but severely punished; as from hence a thousand disorders might arise to occasion the ruin of the community. The novices above all ought to know, that during their noviciate this practice is most rigorously attended to, and it is sometimes with difficulty that they obtain permission to speak or write to their parents."† Neither is one

* Book of Popery.

† St. Alph. Liguori on the Religious State. Trans. from the Italian, by a Priest of the Order of Charity.

brother allowed to hold converſe with, or to enter the cell of another, except he has direct permiſſion ſo to do. Hence in monaſtic communities all are ſtrangers to each other; and every impediment is placed in the way of particular intimacies. Were ſuch a thing however obſerved, a remedy would ſpeedily be applied by diſpatching one of the parties to ſome other and diſtant inſtitute of the order. By this means all caballings are prevented; and I dare ſay ſuch an arrangement is found abſolutely neceſſary to the maintenance of authority and healthy diſcipline. Once in each day, or more frequently, the younger brothers are required to make a public manifeſtation of their faults to the maſter of novices or his deputy; and after receiving abſolution, and being enjoined a ſuitable penance, they kiſs the floor as an expreſſion of their obedience. The habit of ſelf-denial is eſpecially encouraged in the novices; and is carried even to things innocent and harmleſs in themſelves. However excellent the principle of ſelf-denial is, yet the abuſe of it is certainly condemnatory. For inſtance, a religious is not ſuffered to indulge curioſity, by gazing upon different objects when in choir or the refectory; to aſſume a ſlothful poſture in ſit-

ting, ſuch as leaning againſt anything, putting one leg on the other, or croſſing the feet. They are likewiſe encouraged to avoid dainty fruits, or whatever is calculated to pleaſe the palate, even ſhould ſuch delicacies be placed upon the table. Everything that adminiſters delight to the ſenſes is regarded as ſin, not excepting the very eſſential duty of eating; and no one is ſuffered to partake of food except at the appointed hour for meals. It is ſaid that when St. Thereſa heard that ſome of her nuns had aſked permiſſion from the provincial to keep edibles in their cells ſhe upbraided them very ſeverely, and ſaid that their requeſt if complied with would lead to the deſtruction of the monaſtery.* Perhaps there is no diſcipline ſo ſtrongly encouraged as that of mortifying the ſenſes, eſpecially that of taſte. We may judge of this from the writings put into the hands of the religious, of which thoſe of St. Liguori are the moſt in vogue. This author ſpeaking of the neceſſity for ſuch ſelf-denial, obſerves:—"In his Dialogues St. Gregory relates, that in a monaſtery of Sienna, there was a monk who led a very exemplary life. When he was at the point

* Liguori's True Spouſe of Chriſt, chap. viii. ſec. 11.

of death, the religious, expecting to be edified by his laſt moments, gathered around him, 'Brethren,' ſaid the dying man, 'when you faſted I eat in private, and therefore I have already been delivered over to Satan, who now deprives me of life, and carries away my ſoul.' After theſe words he expired." The ſame author relates, "that a certain nun, ſeeing in the garden a very fine lettuce, pulled and eat it, in oppoſition to her rule. She was inſtantly poſſeſſed by a devil who tormented her grievouſly. Her companions called to her aid the holy Abbot Equitius, at whoſe arrival the demon exclaimed, '*What evil have I done? I ſat upon the lettuce: ſhe came and eat it.*' The holy man by his commands compelled the evil ſpirit to depart." In the Ciſtercian records we read, that "St. Bernard, once viſiting his novices, called aſide a brother whoſe name was Acardo, and ſaid that a certain novice, to whom he pointed, would on that day fly from the monaſtery. The ſaint begged of Acardo to watch the novice, and to prevent his eſcape. On the following night, Acardo ſaw a demon approach the novice, and by the ſavoury ſmell of a roaſted fowl, tempt him to deſire forbidden food. The unhappy young man awoke, and, yielding to the temptation, took

his clothes, and prepared to leave the monaſtery. Acardo endeavoured, in vain, to convince him of the dangers to which he would be expoſed in the world. Overcome by guloſity, the wretched man obſtinately reſolved to return to the world, where he died miſerably."* The purpoſe and tendency of ſuch writings cannot be miſtaken, nor can they fail to make the young and docile novice morbidly ſuſceptible on this point. It is ſad that Religion which "never was deſigned to make our pleaſures leſs," ſhould be thus ſacrilegiouſly tortured to ſuit the aſcetic taſtes and abnormal tendencies of ſome minds.

In the domeſtic chapel of each monaſtery, which is often elaborately and ſometimes gorgeouſly decorated, the conſecrated bread is conſtantly preſerved, and a perpetual light, or veſtal fire, kept continually burning before the altar. A brother is ſpecially appointed to the duties of the ſacriſty, who has to attend to the trimming of the lamp, etc. Various ſacred relics, richly enſhrined, are placed on the altar, not ſo much to attract attention as to elicit pious and devotional feelings.† The

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* Liguori's True Spouſe of Chriſt, chap. viii. ſec. II.

† The Pagans in like manner conſecrated to their gods a variety of images, both emboſſed and painted, and placed

firſt Sunday in each month, and the nine days preceding the feſtival of the Incarnation, are ſeaſons of the greateſt ſolemnity. The members of moſt religious fraternities, as ſoon as profeſſed, make perpetual vows of poverty, chaſtity, and obedience. Some inſtitutes are under the juriſdiction of the prelates in whoſe reſpective dioceſes they are eſtabliſhed; while others, like the Jeſuit orders, acknowledge no authority ſave that of their provincials and the pope.

Having thus given a faint outline of the diſcipline adopted in conventual eſtabliſhments, I would conclude with the remark, that there are in theſe inſtitutes, many individuals poſſeſſed of cultivated minds, untarniſhed morals, and enlarged hearts, the ſincerity of whoſe profeſſion cannot for an inſtant be diſputed; individuals moreover who, I heſitate not to affirm, were it not for the peculiar ſyſtem to which they are bound, would become luminaries of the firſt magnitude in the ſcientific, and be ornaments and bleſſings to the ſocial world.

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them in their temples, raiſed them upon their altars, enſhrined them in a coſtly manner, crowned them with flowers, and invoked them with incenſe.—*Huit Serm. ſur l'Examen des Religions*, p. 264. edit. Genève, 1716.

CHAPTER VIII.

The pernicious tendency of Monaſticiſm, viewed in a ſocial, moral, phyſical, and political aſpect.

"Separation from the world, from matter, from the Life of the ſpecies has its practical realization in monaſticiſm."—FEÜERBACH.

I NOW proceed to exhibit a few of the more prominent evils of the monaſtic ſyſtem—a ſuperſtition begotten of ignorance and fanaticiſm, in the formation and completion of which the demon of ingenuity had lent his willing aid,—which has long been foſtered by a claſs of miſanthropic men, and held forth to the world as intrinſically noble and divine, fraught with the choiceſt benefits to its profeſſors, as well as to the community at large, and from which, to borrow the queſtionable phraſeology of Dr. M'Hale, "the odour of

ſanctity is diffuſed throughout the earth." But every unprejudiced mind, that has thoughtfully and thoroughly inveſtigated monaſticiſm in its bearings upon morals, ſociety, and the individual, muſt I am perſuaded form a very oppoſite and a more correct conception. For never, I am decidedly convinced, was there a ſyſtem deviſed by the head and executed by the ſtrategy of man, under the ſpecious garb of godlineſs, from which ſo many ſad diſorders, and ſuch rank impiety have emanated.

My future remarks I would have underſtood as applying wholly and ſolely to modern monaſticiſm. After all, we have little to do with the monaſtics of olden times. Their manner of life was juſt in keeping with the ignorance, and conſequent barbarities and vices of the ages in which they flouriſhed. We ſhould not view the phaſes of modern monaſticiſm through the falſe medium of the paſt; nor viſit the follies, immoralities, and crimes once characteriſtic of the ſyſtem upon thoſe who, not having been the perpetrators of ſuch wickedneſs, ſhould not be participators in its condemnation. On this ground ſimply I ſhould never have penned a ſyllable condemnatory of the monaſtic life. As well

and with equal propriety may Engliſhmen at the preſent day be ſaddled with the grievous defects of our painted Saxon progenitors, or proteſtant clergymen be denounced becauſe forſooth of the errors, ſhortcomings, or poſſibly iniquities, of thoſe who uſhered in the Reformation. I do not, however, mean to convey the impreſſion, that eccleſiaſtical hiſtory throws no light upon the injurious tendency of monachiſm; but merely ſtate, that the ſyſtem has aſſumed a widely different aſpect to that which it was wont to wear. Whatever be the cauſe of this favourable transformation, the fact itſelf is patent. Undoubtedly there ſtill are men under the monaſtic garb to whom the language of "the jolly friar" in the ſong is painfully applicable :—

> "I'm clothed in *ſack-cloth* for my ſin;
> With old *ſack-wine* I'm lined within!"

thereby making "good cheer" their paſſport to heaven! Truly, he who leads a *good life* is ſure to *live well;* and if "veiled nuns and cowled men" do not ſtrictly act up to the ſpirit of the axiom, they at leaſt, fail not occaſionally to loſe ſight of it in its literal and groſſer ſignification. But this peculiar

ſpecies of biped has always exiſted, and will exiſt: and if ſuch noveliſts as Charles Dickens and Samuel Warren are of any authority, does not excluſively belong to "cloiſters grey" or alone, "court the ſolitary ſhade!"

The eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian, alluding to the morals of the monaſtics of the XVIth century, admits even an improvement at that period. He obſerves:—"In moſt of the governors of monaſteries, there are things which deſerve the ſevereſt reprehenſion; nor are idleneſs, gluttony, ignorance, knavery, quarrels, laſciviouſneſs, and the other once prevalent vices of the monaſteries, entirely expelled and baniſhed from them. Yet it would be uncandid to deny, that in many countries the morals of the monks are reſtrained by ſtricter rules, and that the remaining veſtiges of the ancient profligacy are at leaſt concealed more carefully.* Further improvements both in morals and diſcipline have doubtleſs taken place ſince. So that the grave crimes charged againſt monaſtics by ſuch writers of celebrity and undoubted candour as have already been adduced, cannot

* Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. iii. p. 275. (Soames.)

now be laid at their door. The light of the nineteenth century and the purifying radiations of the printing preſs have enlightened their darkneſs—not altogether, but in part. Monaſticiſm certainly is not that groſs, fœtid, unſightly impoſthume it was. Neverthelefs it muſt not be approved of, or tolerated, but rather regarded with the greater ſuſpicion and abhorrence owing to the additional power which it in conſequence exerciſes. The ſyſtem is unnatural and injurious whatever be the practices of thoſe who uphold it; and is not ſimply detrimental to the individuals themſelves, but proves a bane and a barrier to the well-being and progreſs of ſociety. By its ſhade a barren tree is pernicious not only to itſelf, but likewiſe to the fertile plants by which it is ſurrounded.

I. Monaſticiſm is productive of *ſocial* evils.

We are not our own. Hence we cannot lawfully diſpoſe of ourſelves as we liſt. Society, home, kindred, the manifold relations in which we ſtand to others, prevent this. We cannot with impunity refrain from the performance of duties which the laws of ſociety impoſe, and to which thoſe of Nature reſpond. Man was not made to live alone. Such an abnormal condition, although it may

gratify aſcetic minds, is neither deſirable nor good. It gives a precedent for a mode of life which, if much followed, would place a great barrier in the way of the world's progreſs. Civilization could not have a more formidable foe. It is a daring defiance of the divine command: "Increaſe and repleniſh the earth." Nothing can juſtify ſuch a ſyſtem, devoid almoſt of one atoning feature. When perſons combine in ſociety they are neceſſarily compelled to obey certain laws, which, even in their rudeſt form, approach the laws of conſcience. Otherwiſe, how is ſociety poſſible? Every one, therefore, is obliged to ſacrifice private inclination to the public good. Duty extends her mighty ſolemn chain unbrokenly from the loweſt to the higheſt condition. 'Tis a fearful thing to wander out of the path of duty. Were but one of thoſe numberleſs planets aloft in ſpace to deviate from its aſſigned courſe, there is no telling the appalling reſults that would inevitably follow. The whole ſolar ſyſtem might receive a ſhock that, ſhaking worlds to their centre, would involve them in final ruin! What grand and pregnant leſſons Nature teaches, did mankind but liſten to her ſilent monitions!

The monaſtic ſyſtem ſevers ſocial ties. It ſets at defiance the claims which ſociety has upon the individual, and by ſo doing renders man irreſponſible to human laws. It moreover deceives by holding out falſe notions of happineſs which never can be realized. St. Sebaſtian ſays, that if mankind could but know the peace which the monaſtic ſtate affords, "the entire world would become a convent." Another affirms, that if this were ſufficiently underſtood, "men would ſcale the convent walls on every ſide in order to become monks!"* Ruffinus declares, that "without a doubt the earth is preſerved from ruin by the merits of the religious."† The tendency of this hateful ſyſtem is to diſſolve ſociety altogether by breaking up ſocial relationſhips; and by checking there production of the human ſpecies to interfere with the divine purpoſe in man's creation. The principle of monaſticiſm is pre-eminently antiſocial, and as ſuch ſhould be denounced by the philanthropiſt, and regarded as the bane of whatever is good and lovely in our common human nature. The opinion of all who

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* Liguori on the Religious State. cons. vi.

† Pro. in vita Patr. (Quoted by Liguori.)

do not take a contracted view of the ſubject, concurs in the ſacred record, that "it is not good for man to be alone," and that monaſtic indolence and ſecluſion are incompatible with the purpoſes and ends of life. The wiſdom of Heaven certainly never deſigned or contemplated ſuch a ſcheme. For as a learned writer obſerves, "A wiſe and intelligent author muſt propoſe ſome end in the production of things; but the end, whatever it was, could never be promoted by indolence and ſloth. Non-activity is the next to non-exiſtence, and could no more anſwer any uſeful purpoſe. A production of ſtupid, unmoving, paſſive beings, could be no other than a general chaos, which could prove of no further utility than as affording matter for future motion, harmony, and order."*

Doubtleſs there are many who enter the cloiſter with feelings bordering upon rapture, fondly expecting to realiſe a hiding-place from the ſtorm, a covert from the tempeſt, and a ſecure haven, "where no wind can reach them, and no wave can harm," but who afterwards diſcover to their unutterable ſorrow, that they have followed the "ignis fatuus" of their fervid imagina-

* Dodwell.

tions, are more tempeſt-toſſed than ever, and that inſtead of landing ſafely on a ſheltered iſland, they have but alighted on a dangerous quickſand. It is ſad enough when the deluded enthuſiaſt voluntarily embraces the monaſtic ſtate, wherein is anticipated the realization of vain and ſanguine expectations, unhappily but too frequently fruſtrated. But, is it not horrifying to think that individuals whoſe inclinations and feelings revolt at, and are entirely adverſe to, ſuch a retreat, ſhould be compelled, as well by intimidation as entreaty, to adopt ſo ungenial a condition. I have witneſſed an inſtance of this cruelty; and cruelty is by far too mild a term for ſuch barbarous conduct:—

A Roman catholic curate, with whom I was on terms of intimacy, had a ſiſter, an intelligent and intereſting young lady, reſiding with him. In conſequence of ſlender pecuniary reſources, he determined upon reſigning his dwelling, and taking up his future abode with the prieſt of the pariſh. His firſt ſtep therefore was to ſolicit, and finally to compel, his ſiſter to enter a community of incloſed nuns in the ſame town where I, when a novice, was located. Notwithſtanding her repeated refuſals and entreaties, and the in-

terpoſition of a younger brother, who had juſt returned from college for the vacation, ſhe was compelled, though in the bitterneſs of grief, to comply with the prieſt's unnatural demand! Previous to entering the convent, ſhe declared to me how painful it was to her feelings, and how deeply it grieved her, to be obliged to become incarcerated as a nun in oppoſition to her wiſhes. Frequently have I beheld her bathed in tears, and indulging in ſecret the grief of her heart, at the conſideration of the unhappy deſtiny that awaited her. This young lady ſtill remains in the gloomy cloiſter, having taken perpetual vows, and received the black veil—fit emblem of that ſorrow, which in all probability conſumes, like a canker, the heart of her who wears it! This is not a ſolitary inſtance of the barbarity exerciſed in order to compel perſons to become ſecluded from the world; although many who are ignorant of the ſyſtem fooliſhly imagine that the act is a voluntary one. Thus it is that even the ſignification of words is changed; weakneſs, which yields to force, is termed *docility*, and the *yes* extorted by violence, is called *conſent!*

The monaſtic eſtabliſhments in our own country at the preſent day are mainly ſuſtained

by the influx of young people who, actuated by a variety of motives, sacrifice their fortunes, affections, and lives, at the shrine of this modern Moloch. I do not believe that the young catholic mind of this nation has, generally speaking, any particular predilections or prepossessions for such a strange and injurious condition of existence. Hence postulants, for the most part, have to be procured from countries less remarkable for the very unpoetical quality of *common sense*. For my own part, I confess that there is a kind of infatuation or charm around monastic retreats which attracts the beholder. The solemn stillness that reigns around them; the sombre countenances and peculiar attire of their inmates; the religious services—all impress the mind deeply, and almost force from the heart the ejaculation: "It is good to be here!" I do not wonder that so many youthful minds should thus be led astray. Fancying a very Eden near to them, and a holy delight to be at once attained, but never dreaming of the long, difficult way between, or of the torment which their dreadful after-thoughts occasion, —they rush blindly to their ruin.

Burton, in one of his writings,* quotes a

* Life and Correspondence of David Hume.

fragment which is too valuable not to be tranſcribed, eſpecially as it refers to this very myſtic and anti-ſocial mental condition of which I have been ſpeaking. He remarks: —"'Tis obſervable of the human mind that when it is ſmitten with any idea of merit or perfection beyond what its faculties can attain, and in the purſuit of which it uſes not reaſon and experience for its guide, it knows no mean, but as it gives the rein and even adds the ſpur to every florid conceit or fancy, runs in a moment quite wide of nature. Thus we find when, without diſcretion, it indulges its devout terrors, that working on ſuch fairy ground, it quickly buries itſelf in its own whimſies and chimeras, and raiſes up to itſelf a new ſet of paſſions, affections, deſires, objects, and in ſhort a perfectly new world of its own, inhabited by different beings, and regulated by different laws from that of ours. In this new world 'tis ſo poſſeſſed that it can endure no interruption from the old; but as nature is apt ſtill on every occaſion to recall it thither, it muſt undermine it by art, and retiring altogether from the commerce of mankind, if it be ſo bent upon its religious exerciſe, from the myſtic by an eaſy tranſition, degenerate into the hermit." Hence, prompted

by this fatal pietiſm, many are fooliſhly induced to adopt a life of ſequeſtration from the world; but in the end, and not infrequently when it is too late to attempt to free themſeves from the graſp of their ſpiritual rulers, they are brought to ſee and regret the raſh act which binds them to the cloiſter, as well as the vanity of having purſued the phantom of monaſtic felicity!

Further: Monaſticiſm is productive of *moral* evils.

Not only is monaſticiſm inimical to ſocial well-being by virtually diſannulling and oppoſing thoſe laws by which ſociety is governed, but it likewiſe ſnaps aſunder and uproots the holieſt affections of the heart. It heſitates not to ſet aſide that moral law which commands us to honour and obey our parents, and teaches that the pure love of the creature is not harmleſs but injurious; whilſt, O grief of griefs! it gives religion as its warrant. To ſome theſe aſſertions may appear gratuitous. If ſo, it is for want of being ſufficiently informed on the ſubject. But, as I purpoſe ſtrictly adhering to the Shakſpearian maxim, "Nothing extenuate, nor ſet down aught in malice," and as I wiſh the reader to give me the character of being diſpaſſionate, I ſhall

furniſh ſatisfactory authority for the ſtatements I advance. The council of Toledo, treating of the monaſtic ſtate, ſays emphatically: "After children reach the age of fourteen years it is for them to follow their own wiſhes in this reſpect, either with the conſent of their parents, or according to their own devotion, *independently of the direction of parents.*"* This opinion has alſo been confirmed by ſeveral councils. Some of the Fathers, and other theological writers, take preciſely the ſame view. St. Thomas ſays: "Slaves are not bound to obey their maſters, nor children their parents, in the queſtion of contracting marriage, or of entering into religion, or of any other like determination."† Pinamonti goes ſo far as to affirm, that a child is not conſcientiouſly obliged to aſk even the advice of his parents if the cloiſter be the bent of his inclination. Liguori,

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* "Parentibus filios religioni tradere, non amplius quam uſque ad decimum quartum eorum ætatis annum, licentia poterit eſſe. Poſtea vero, an cum voluntatæ parentum, an ſuæ devotionis ſit ſolitarium votum, erit filiis licitum religionis aſſumere cultum."

† Non tenentur nec ſervi dominis, nec filii parentibus obedire de matrimonio contrahendo, vel virginitate ſervanda, vel aliquo alio hujuſmodi—II. II. q. 10. a. 5.

taking up the ſame theme, obſerves: "If it would be a great error to ſeek the counſel of our parents, it would be a ſtill greater error to deſire their conſent and to aſk it of them, for by ſo doing we run the riſk of loſing our vocation."* Then for the encouragement of weak or unſtable ſouls he continues: "There have been ſeveral ſaints who, when they were called to leave the world, quitted their father's houſe without even making their deſire known to them. Thus did St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis Xavier, St. Philip Neri, etc., and we know that the Lord ſhowed by miracles that he approved their glorious flight. St. Peter of Alcantra, in going from the houſe of his mother to the monaſtery found his flight impeded by a large river, which he did not know how to croſs. He recommended himſelf to God, and was inſtantly tranſported to the oppoſite ſide. So, in a ſimilar caſe, Staniſlaus Koſtka, when fleeing from his home without his father's permiſſion, was cloſely followed by his brother in a carriage, deſirous to overtake him; but, juſt as he was on the point of doing this the horſes ſtopped ſuddenly, and by

* Liguori on the Religious State.

no whipping could be induced to advance; but after a ſhort interval they turned round and quickly proceeded back to the town. We have alſo the example of the bleſſed Oringa of Valdarno, in Tuſcany, who being promiſed by her parents in marriage to a young man fled from him to conſecrate herſelf to God. Finding her way ſtopped by the river Arno, ſhe prayed for a few moments, when ſhe beheld the waters open, which riſing on each ſide, like two cryſtal walls, afforded her a dry paſſage."*

Liguori, with all the ingenuity of a caſuiſt, preſuppoſes a caſe where a child bent upon entering a cloiſter had no reaſon to dread the refuſal of his parents; and aſks if under ſuch circumſtances, it was proper to ſolicit their bleſſing. He replies in the negative; and ſtrongly diſapproves of ſuch "phariſaical ſcruples;" adding, "If you are called to leave the world be careful that your reſolution be not diſcovered to your parents, but be content with the bleſſing of God."† Another of the ſchoolmen‡ remarks, that if ſuch vocation ſhould come from the devil it

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* Liguori on the Religious State.
† Ibid. ‡ St. Thomas.

ought to be embraced, as a wiſe counſel given by an enemy! The principle is, that monaſtic obedience ſuperſedes and diſpenſes with all other obedience, even that which human and divine laws have pronounced moſt ſacred and inviolable.* It is ſtated in a work of high authority, written by a celebrated Spaniſh Jeſuit, that if parents ſhould chance to lie in the way, or become an impediment to ſuch of their children as were deſirous of embracing a "religious life," as the monaſtic profeſſion is unduly termed, "*they ſhould walk over them!*"†—

> "Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend,
> More hideous when thou ſhew'ſt thee in a child
> Than the ſea-monſter!"

I feel very tenderly on this point, and can ſpeak from bitter, painful experience. Being an only ſon, and pretty clearly anticipating the fierce oppoſition I ſhould otherwiſe have

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* Francis de Sales ſaid:—Nunquam periit obediens. S. Philippus Nerius aſſerebat quod qui confeſſario obſequebatur, ſe certum faciebat, Deo non redditurum de ſuis operibus rationem. Contra verò, ajebat S. Joannes de Cruce, non ſatisfieri de eo quod dicit confeſſarius, eſſe ſuperbiam, et in Fidem peccatum.—*Liguori*, I. 5.

† Exercicio de Perfec. Por el Padre Alon. Rodriguez, de la Compañia de Jeſus. Sevilla, Año. M.DC.IX.

to encounter, I entered a convent without imparting to my mother the leaſt intimation of my purpoſe; nor had ſhe the remoteſt idea of where I was for ſome days, until I diſpatched from the novitiate in Dublin, through the ſuperior-general of the Order, a letter acquainting her with the raſh ſtep I had taken. This letter, I need ſcarcely ſay, underwent a ſtrict *ſurveillance* before it was ſuffered to paſs on its deſtination. Of courſe, the heads of the convent planned and aided my eſcape, and warmly approved of my reſolution. A dignitary of my acquaintance to whom I had, in the capacity of confeſſor, communicated my deſign, certainly, I muſt do him the juſtice to ſay, did not altogether approve of the idea that I ſhould deſert my widowed mother's houſe without aſking at leaſt for the maternal benediction; but added he, "that is what I would do were the caſe my own; yet I ſhould not care, under the circumſtances, whether I received *a bleſſing or a curſe!*" A biſhop alſo aſſured me that, having examined into the particulars of my caſe, I was not under any moral obligation to act otherwiſe than I had intended. I have no deſire whatever to ſpeak harſhly of thoſe who out of

perſonal kindneſs favoured a ſcheme which has ſince afforded me the bittereſt regret; and merely mention theſe facts as corroborative of my former ſtatements. It is recorded, that after the celebrated Madame de Chantal, of the *Viſitation*, had forced from her father his conſent, who upon acceding to her requeſt exclaimed, "O God! it will coſt me my life!"—young Chantal, her ſon ran to her, claſped her about the neck, and by the moſt endearing expreſſions endeavoured to prevail with her to alter the reſolution ſhe had taken. When he was unable to gain his point he flung himſelf acroſs the door, when "the holy widow ſtepped over his body!" Her father died the following year. Only juſt imagine what that terrible force muſt be which is ſufficient to procure the unnatural diſſeverance of that ſacred web, ſo beautifully and firmly woven together by the Father of our common nature!

"In my Virgo Μισραμος," ſays Eraſmus, "I hold up to reprobation thoſe who entice young lads and girls into monaſteries againſt their parents' wills, abuſing their ſimplicity or ſuperſtition, and perſuading them that there is no chance of ſalvation but in a cloiſter. If the world were not full of ſuch anglers;

if countleſs promiſing minds have not been moſt wretchedly buried alive in ſuch places, then I have been wrong in my reprehenſions. But if ever I am forced to ſpeak out what I feel upon this ſubject, I will ſo paint the portrait of thoſe kidnappers, and ſo repreſent the magnitude of the evil, that every one ſhall confeſs I have not been wrong, though I have not repreſented them with civility, leſt I ſhould afford a handle to the wicked."* Eraſmus, whoſe original name was Gerhard, by his great learning and literary labours precipitated the Reformation. His talents attracted the notice and admiration of princes and cardinals, and procured for him the offer of valuable preferments, which he however invariably rejected, while his ſarcaſtic expoſure of the knavery of the monks, arouſed the ire of the "pious brotherhood," and enliſted their paſſions and prejudices againſt him. Luther and himſelf were on terms of intimate friendſhip for ſome time. At length a diſruption occurred, and to the laſt moments of his life Luther avowed his antipathy and ſpoke of Eraſmus with contempt.†

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* De Colloq. Util.

† *Vide* Notice of, in Moſheim's Eccles. Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 569. (Soames.)

Monaſticiſm likewiſe condemns as pernicious and criminal the natural affection that ſhould ſubſiſt between children and parents, brothers, ſiſters and relatives. "The religious," ſays Liguori, "who tells her parents, and her brothers, and her ſiſters, that ſhe knows them not, is the true ſpouſe of Chriſt."* Again: "The nun who leaves her relatives in effect, and in *affection*, ſhall obtain eternal beatitude in heaven."† "Piety towards relatives is impiety towards God," ſays Jerome.‡ Beſides Liguori gives the following inſtructions to the religious: "Never ſeek a viſit from your relatives, but when they come, withdraw from them as ſoon as poſſible; and excuſe your withdrawal by ſaying that you muſt attend to the duties of your office; that you muſt aſſiſt a perſon that is ſick, or by ſome ſimilar apology . . . . . Should your relatives complain of your unwillingneſs to ſerve them, ſhould they even charge you with diſaffection, with ingratitude, and even call you the enemy of your family, anſwer them with firmneſs that

* The Nun Sanctified, chap. x. (On Detachment from Relatives.) † Ibid.

‡ Epiſt. 28, ad Paulum. (Quoted by Liguori.)

you are dead to the world, and that it is your duty to attend only to the ſervice of God and the monaſtery."* I am inclined to believe that thoſe fond parents and affectionate brothers and ſiſters who have, or deſire to have, members of their families in the cloiſter, are little aware of the unnatural and cruel exactions which that ſyſtem demands from them. My God! the very thought makes one ſhudder!

But as all natural attachment is thus peremptorily proſcribed and denounced, ſurely mutual affection, one would imagine, between the inmates of religious houſes of the ſame ſex, muſt be encouraged. Alas! no. That too is regarded in as diſtorted and ſinful a light as the other. Hear the moſt authoritative writer on the ſubject:—"The heart of a religious muſt be an encloſed garden excluding every affection which is not for God."† Again, St. Baſil ſays: "Avoid familiarity with your equals: how many young perſons has the devil, through their companions, drawn into hell to be burned with eternal fire."‡

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* The Nun Sanctified, ch. x. ſec. 1., etc.

† Ibid. ſec. 11.

‡ Serm. de Abdic. rer. etc. (Quoted by Liguori.)

This Father, we are told, "prescribed a very severe chastisement for the nuns of his order who should entertain particular friendships."* These St. Bernard characterises as "poisoned attachments."†

It is quite reasonable to suppose that monastics, who by virtue of their profession are necessarily obliged to regard all human affection as criminal, can possess little, if indeed any sentiment of love or even sympathy for each other. I am in possession of various facts which bear me out in these remarks, but shall content myself by merely relating a few out of many examples.

On particular occasions most religious orders have their "gala days," or seasons of festivity, when the ordinary discipline of the monastery is suspended, and when the community indulge to some degree in the pleasures of the table. On one of these occasions there happened to be in the monastery a young professed monk who was suffering from a painful disease, and actually in a state of mental aberration. Amidst the sprightliness, wit, and joviality of the refectory, the agonizing groans of the sufferer, issuing from his solitary cell,

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* The Nun Sanctified, chap. x. sec. 11. † Ibid.

would reverberate, with horrible ſound, around the feſtive board; yet callous-hearted men could not be induced to put off good cheer, but were content to obſerve the worldly maxim, "eat, drink, and be merry," regardleſs of the cries of a wretched brother. They may, forſooth, give expreſſion now and again to a word of ſympathy, and ſuch an exclamation as "Poor fellow!" may be extorted from them; but groans ſufficient to rend the heart and call forth tears of compaſſion from the moſt unrelenting, were not ſufficient to force the goblet from their lips, or to caſt even a ſhade of ſorrow upon a ſingle countenance preſent. This is by no means an overdrawn picture.

I have likewiſe known a novice to be left without attendance or nouriſhment for ſeveral hours together, although he lay in languiſhment upon a bed of ſickneſs, exhauſted from loſs of blood occaſioned by the frequent application of leeches. His diſeaſe too was of ſuch a peculiar nature—I believe induced by the ſtate of life he had but recently adopted —that it was conſidered likely to terminate fatally. After the lapſe of many hours, the deputy-ſuperior entered his cell, and with cold unconcern, obſerved: "O brother! I be-

lieve we have forgotten to ſend you any refreſhment to-day." I was preſent on the occaſion, engaged in applying a moiſtened ſponge to the wounds made by the leeches, and am poſitive as to the circumſtance. It is no uncommon practice for the novices to be dealt with in this manner.

But this very neglect is part of the diſcipline through which monaſtics have to paſs. Liguori in his inſtructions to the ſick religious obſerves :—" It is not enough that you are contented with what is given to you, and do not ſeek what through the negligence of the diſpenſers you have failed to receive, which would be a great fault, but you muſt be ready occaſionally to ſuffer from the want of thoſe things which the rule allows. You will ſometimes have a deficiency of clothes, bed-covering, clean linen, and food ; and you muſt reſt quite contented with the little you have received, *without making complaint or diſturbance*, even though they ſhould ſeem neceſſary."* Again, treating of patience under infirmity and neglect, and condemning thoſe who expreſs complaint thereat, he remarks :—" Another may ſay, ' But where

* Inſtructions on the Religious State, 11.

has charity gone! Behold how my very ſiſters forget me, and abandon me on the bed of ſickneſs.' I pity you; not on account of your bodily infirmities, but becauſe of your want of patience under them, which makes you doubly ſick in body and ſoul. The *ſiſters forget you:* but you have *forgotten Jeſus Chriſt*,"*—that is, by giving way to complaint. I deem theſe extracts from an authoritative quarter very important, as they prove that the very inhumanities I have deſcribed are not merely accidents but reſults, and form part and parcel of the heterogeneous ſyſtem to which monks and nuns are alike ſubjected.

The monaſtic life is a ſtate of the ſevereſt bondage, as it rivets its weighty and galling yoke upon the minds and bodies of its victims; whilſt by enjoining a *blind* ſubmiſſion to the dictates of a ſuperior, it renders the exerciſe of thought and reaſon ſuperfluous and criminal. Rational and innocent amuſements are prohibited as inconſiſtent with a religious profeſſion; and therefore the youngeſt poſtulant is compelled to aſſume the ſour and ſtudied gravity of the oldeſt

* The Nun Sanctified, chap. xiii. ſec. 1.

profeſſed religious in the community. Hence ariſe, from undue reſtraint, incalculable moral as well as phyſical evils. An eminent writer,* alluding to the fatal conſequences which invariably reſult from the prohibition of innocent amuſements, thus obſerves:—"People ſhould be guarded againſt temptation to unlawful pleaſures by furniſhing them with the means of innocent ones. In every community there ſhould be pleaſures, relaxations, and means of agreeable excitement; for if innocent ones be not furniſhed, reſort will be had to criminal. Man was made to enjoy as well as to labour, and the ſtate of ſociety ſhould be adapted to this principle of human nature." Here are enunciated ſome ſound philoſophical views with reference to ſocial polity, which I am glad to find our rulers, as well as others, are beginning to recognize and even practically adopt.

Monaſtic diſcipline gradually works upon the individual until it changes his nature. At firſt it poſſeſſes the inſidious power of an opiate which lulls the ſoul into a comatic ſtate. It deſtroys will and produces moral

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* Dr. Channing.

and mental annihilation. It is an unchriſtian ſuicide,* worthy of the execration of every philanthropiſt. Even by the laws of this realm monaſtics are conſidered to be *dead* in effect. The means which bring about this ſingular transformation are ſimple. "The weaker they are," obſerves Michelet, "the leſs they are ſuſpected, and for this cauſe they are ſtrong. Iron claſhes againſt the rock, is blunted, and loſes its edge and point. But who would diſtruſt water? Weak, colourleſs, inſipid as it is, if however it always continues to fall in the ſame place it will in time hollow out the flinty rock."† The power I ſpeak of is *Obedience*.

"In coming to the Viſitation," ſaid Jane Frances de Chantal to her nuns, "you muſt diſunite yourſelves from yourſelves. You muſt ſuffer your hearts to be mortified, pared, and bent, as is thought expedient by obedience, and an entire reſignation of yourſelves into the hands of thoſe that direct you with perfect ſimplicity." Obedience is made the *alpha* and the *omega* of monaſtic diſcipline.

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* Loyola on his death-bed enjoined every member of his order to be in the hands of his ſuperior juſt *like a dead body*.

† Prieſts, Women, and Families.

According to Liguori, and other theologians, even when it is doubtful whether the command of the ſuperior is contrary to the divine law, the religious is bound to obey, and ſo far from ſinning thereby, he pleaſes God.* He likewiſe treats at length upon the four degrees of perfect obedience, viz., promptneſs, exactneſs, cheerfulneſs, and ſimplicity. He alſo quotes the following ſtories for the encouragement of thoſe religious whoſe ſtandard of ſpiritual obedience is not quite up to the mark:—"To try the obedience of ſome of his monks who were confined to bed by ſickneſs, St. Columban commanded them to riſe, and go to the barn to thraſh corn. As many as were filled with the true ſpirit of obedience inſtantly aroſe, and were ſuddenly reſtored to health. The others, becauſe they were weak in ſpirit as well as in body remained in bed and continued in their infirmities."† Again, "Bleſſed Juniper, while employed in planting a tree in the garden, was called by St. Francis. The brother did not obey the call immediately,

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* The Nun Sanctified, chap. vii. ſect. III.

† P. Plat. de bono. Strat. rel. lib. ii. cap. 5.—Ibid. cap. vii. ſec. v.

but waited till he had finiſhed the work in which he was engaged. The ſaint, to ſhow him the fault he had committed by the tardineſs of his obedience, curſed the tree, and, on the part of God, commanded it to grow no longer. The tree *obeyed*, and never increaſed in ſize. The narrator of this fact ſtates, that when he wrote his annals, the tree was preſerved in the convent of the city of Carniola, that it remained green, but was as ſmall as when it was planted."*

Rodriguez, taking up the like theme, draws powerfully on his imagination for the edification of thoſe who by their vows have made a perfect abnegation of their will:—"There was once," he tells us, "a good religious employed in copying out ſome written paper; he was no ſooner ſet to it and had made only one letter, but the clock ſtruck; to comply with the call of obedience he left it in that manner, and when he returned, found it all written in letters of gold!"†

Molinos alſo, touching upon the ſame key-note, ſays,—"To act is the deed of the

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* Wadding. Annal. Min. an. 1222. n. xi. (Quoted by Liguori.)

† Exercicio, de Perfec. (De la Obediencià.)

novice; to ſuffer is immediate gain; to die is perfection. Let us go forward in darkneſs (*blind* obedience) and we ſhall go well. The horſe that goes round blindfolded grinds corn ſo much the better. Let us neither think nor read. A practical maſter will tell us better than any book, what we muſt do at the very moment. It is a great ſecurity to have an experienced guide to govern and direct us according to his actual intelligence, and prevent our being deceived by the demon of our own ſenſes."* O, terrible effect of ſpiritual obedience! For the body to die, and be put in the ground; be trodden under foot; become foul, and ſuffer the ordeal of corruption, until rottenneſs turn to duſt and aſhes, leaving nothing behind to teſtify that it ever had exiſtence, is nothing,—verily *nothing!* But for the ſoul itſelf to moulder within the living tomb that encaſes it, *this* is of all deaths the moſt definitive and deadly. "O horrible! O horrible! moſt horrible!"

But it may be aſked, what is there decidedly pernicious in the monaſtic ſyſtem now-a-days, as monks and nuns do not adopt the rigid diſcipline of the ancient recluſes. I anſwer, firſt of all, *Solitude.*

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* Guida Spirituale.

Very few minds are formed capable of reſiſting ſuch a formidable influence as this. And hence the adoption of ſolitary confinement by our civil rulers as a mode of puniſhment to which the moſt hardened culprit muſt become amenable. Think you, is it nothing to paſs your exiſtence away in a reverie; to have your lips hermetically ſealed; your affections dead within your boſom; and no will that you can call your own; although "Man is man by virtue of willing."* "To be alone," as Michelet ſays, "and not alone; forlorn and yet watched. Alone in a ſolitude without tranquillity of mind, and without repoſe. How ſweet in compariſon with this would be the ſolitude of the woods! The trees would have compaſſion; they are not ſo inſenſible as they ſeem; they hear and they liſten."† There is no ſolitude ſo truly overwhelming as that of the cloiſter. It is felt the more intenſely from proximity to the buſy world without; and like moſt other things becomes heightened by contraſt. Monaſtics who paſs long and beautiful years beneath this deadly Upas ſhade come at length to loſe both

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* Emerſon's Repreſentative Men.

† Prieſts, Women, and Families.

phyſical and mental perceptions and even ſenſations of pleaſure. Iſolated as thoſe flowers which bloom in the Alpine regions, where no ſun-ray ever penetrates and no human eye obtrudes, and which ſeem to accuſe Nature of having neither plan nor pity in her creation; they remain melancholy memorials of heathen ignorance and the deſtructive fanaticiſm of paſt ages, which the light of human progreſs and modern civilization has been unable to reach. Fitly does Molière make *Célimène* ſay in refuſing to follow the gloomy *Alceſte*:—

"La ſolitude effraie une âme de vingt ans:
Je ne ſens point la mienne aſſez grande, aſſez forte,
Pour me réſoudre à prendre un deſſein de la ſorte."*

Dr. Andrew Combe treating of the evils conſequent upon ſolitude thus obſerves: "If we ſhun the ſociety of our fellow-creatures and ſhrink from taking a ſhare in the active duties of life, mental indolence and phyſical debility beſet our path. But if by engaging in the buſineſs of life, and taking an active intereſt in the advancement of ſociety, we daily exerciſe our powers of perception, thought, and feeling, we promote the health of the whole corporeal ſyſtem, invigorate the

* The "Miſanthrope."

mind itſelf, and at the ſame time experience the higheſt mental gratification of which a human being is ſuſceptible—that of having fulfilled the end and object of our duties to God, to our fellow-men, and to ourſelves. If we neglect our faculties, or deprive them of their objects, we weaken the organization, give riſe to diſtreſſing diſeaſes, and at the ſame time experience the bittereſt feelings that can afflict human nature, *ennui* and melancholy. The harmony thus ſhown to exiſt between the moral and phyſical world is but another example of the numerous inducements to that right conduct and activity, in purſuing which the Creator has evidently deſtined us to find terreſtrial happineſs."* Even upon the very deaf and dumb ſolitude exerciſes a moſt injurious effect; and caſes are recorded by Andral,† which place the matter beyond diſpute. Pinel likewiſe mentions an inſtance which ſtrikingly exemplifies the dire conſequences of ſuddenly removing from ſociety and entering upon ſecluſion.‡

Mr. Charles Dickens, alluding to the ſoli-

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* Conſtitution of Man.

† Dictionnaire de Med. et de Chirurg. Pratiques.

‡ Traité medico-philoſoph. ſur l'Aliénation Mentale.

tary prison of Philadelphia, employs language which is equally applicable to every convent in the land. He observes :—"I am convinced that there is a depth of terrible endurance there which none but the sufferers themselves can fathom . . . . My firm conviction is that independent of the mental anguish it occasions—an anguish so acute and so tremendous that all imagination of it must fall short of the reality—it wears the mind into a morbid state . . . . There are many instances on record of men who have chosen, or have been condemned to lives of perfect solitude, but I scarcely remember one even among sages of strong and vigorous intellect, where its effect has not become apparent in some disordered train of thought or some gloomy hallucination. What monstrous phantoms, bred of despondency and doubt, and born and reared in solitude, have stalked the earth, making creation ugly, and darkening the face of heaven!"*

I for one see no distinction between convents and such prisons as Mr. Dickens complains of; and I doubt not but that the discipline of the latter is far more lax, and less

* Notes on America.

reprehenſible. Theological writers, not ſatiſfied with the ſecluſion of the cloiſter, juſtify, nay, even recommend, cloſe confinement. Hear Liguori: "Would to God," he exclaims, "that in all monaſteries there were grates of punched iron, ſuch as we find in ſome obſervant convents."* Then he continues: "A certain author relates, that the ſuperioreſs of a monaſtery procured a cloſe grate; but the devil, through rage, firſt bent it, and afterwards ſent it rolling through the houſe. The good ſuperioreſs placed it, crooked as it was, in the parlour, to give the nuns to underſtand, that as the grate was hateful to hell ſo it was pleaſing to God. Oh! what an awful account ſhall the abbeſs have to give to God who introduces open grates. St. Thereſa wrote this great ſentence: 'A monaſtery of nuns, in which there is *liberty* ſerves to conduct them to hell!'"† Is it any wonder that the poor woman into whoſe hands ſuch a book of inſtructions is placed, ſhould have within her a feeling which, ſweeping over heart and brain like a fire-flood, tells her that ſhe is a *priſoner* in her cloiſter and

* The Nun Sanctified, chap. xvi. ſec. 1. † Ibid.

a *ſlave* to her ſuperior, irremediably bound as Maſſinger's *Hortenſio*:—

> "I am ſubject to another's will, and can
> Nor ſpeak nor do without *permiſſion* from her!"

The recluſe naturally and inevitably is a morbid-minded, miſanthropic, imbecile creature; nay, he is even an ignoble and contemptible creature, for he views with jaundiced eye and prejudiced feelings, Nature and her wondrous beauties, and makes his purely ſubjective mind the miſerable ſtandard of virtue and pietiſm. His mental and phyſical perceptions are diſeaſed, diſtorted, diſmal; ſo that he cannot obſerve with pleaſurable emotions what delights other men—like the unhappy foundling of whom we read, who in gazing upon the loveliеſt flower could only pay attention to the tiny "black beetle" that crawled over it, and which pitiable perverſity marred the enjoyment derivable from the ſight of flowers ever after.

Another *moral* evil of monaſticiſm, not a whit leſs objectionable than that I have juſt deſcribed, is *Celibacy*.

The celibate ſtate is imperatively eſſential to this ſtrange and unnatural condition. Hence every "religious" at his or her pro-

feſſion vows a life of perpetual chaſtity. Thus a kind of artificial exiſtence,—a *ſexleſs ſex*, in fact,—is created which mars by its deformity the beauty of God's handy-work, and oppoſes that "Order" which "is Heaven's firſt law." The true philoſophical idea of man is a duality of perſons. Man and woman firſt conſtituted it, and both are ſtill neceſſary not only to the ſucceſſion but to the perfection of the race. The individual who does not virtually deny his manhood, muſt feel conſcious that he is merely a component part of the great whole, needing another part to complete the perfect being. Woman is eſſential to the refinement, enjoyment, purification, as well as the moral and ſocial developement, of the oppoſite ſex. Not leſs neceſſary is the ſociety of man to the woman. Each acts upon the other with moſt ſalutary effect, in obedience to that powerful law of ſympathy which Nature planted in the human heart, for the beſt and wiſeſt of purpoſes. Where this principle is diſcarded, from whatever motive, we find that Nature herſelf becomes her own Nemeſis to avenge the violation of her decrees; though in what preciſe manner it is needleſs to particulariſe. To the mawkiſh, profane

pietiſm of monkery, the ſacrament * of marriage is an unholy thing; for the natural principle of marriage, which is the love of the ſexes, is excluded from heaven. Why, Hindoo fanaticiſm never attained to ſuch a pitch of folly, ſhall I ſay *impiety*, as this. According to that ſyſtem no man could aſſume the office of a Sanyaſſi, or hermit abſorbed in God, if he had not previouſly fulfilled certain obligations, one of which was, that he had a legitimate ſon. It was reſerved for monaſticiſm to pronounce it the higheſt and holieſt act of religion when virginity ſhould offer itſelf at its altars, and when the *connubial* ſhould be ſacrificed to the *divine love!* The ſchoolmen had rendered love to God as a perſonal Being, a literal, ſtrict, perſonal, excluſive love; conſequently for the devout ſoul to cheriſh any other, was regarded as a heinous ſin—in fine, as adultery; and entirely incompatible with the tranſcendental beatitudes of the Goſpel. "*Perfectum autem eſſe nolle delinquere eſt*," ſays St. Jerome. "How," aſks St. Clement, "can I divide my heart between God and man; how can an earthly wife

* This term is not employed in a *theological* ſenſe.

have a place in my heaven-filled breaſt?" "Thy beloved," writes à Kempis, "has this quality, that he will ſuffer no rival; he *alone* will have thy heart, will rule *alone* in thy ſoul as a king on his throne. Thou canſt not ſerve God, and at the ſame time have thy joys in earthly things; thou muſt wean thyſelf from all acquaintances and friends, and ſever thy ſoul from all temporal conſolation." "Ye wiſh," ſays Tauler, "to have both God and the creature together, and that is impoſſible. Joy in God and joy in the creature cannot exiſt together." "Jeſus," ſays St. Jerome, in his Epiſtle to Euſtochia, "is a jealous ſpouſe: he is unwilling that *your face be ſeen by others.*"* "Jeſus has placed," ſays St. Agnes, "a ſeal on my forehead, that I admit no *lover* but him."† "A religious," writes Liguori, "on the day of her profeſſion is eſpouſed to Jeſus Chriſt; for in the ceremony of profeſſion, the biſhop ſays to the novice about to be profeſſed: '*I eſpouſe thee to Jeſus Chriſt; may he preſerve thee inviolate. Receive then as his ſpouſe, the ring of faith.*'"‡ "As firſt fruits are the moſt delicious," ſays

* Liguori's True Spouſe of Chriſt, chap. i.
† Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

cardinal Hugo, "ſo virgins conſecrated to God, are moſt pleaſing and dear to him." "Virginity," ſays St. Cyprian, "is the queen of all virtues, and the poſſeſſion of every good."* Tertullian, Ambroſe, and others, favour this ſupernaturaliſm, and recognize the ſacred rite of marriage more in the light of a neceſſary evil than an abiding good; and merely ſanction it, not in order to ſanctify but to reſtrict the fleſh; to repreſs; to kill it. In fine, to drive Beelzebub out by Beelzebub. Even Luther was not proof againſt the force of early training and prejudice; for although he certainly married a nun, yet his writings ſavour of attachment to that very principle which his own connubial act condemned. "Chaſtity," he remarks, "is a *nobler* gift than marriage!" *Mirabile dictu!* Hence it will appear that immaculate virginity is the Diana of monaſticiſm and its hyperphyſical eulogiſts and abettors, to whom the language of Akenſide may fitly be applied:—

"Thou, alas!
Doſt thou aſpire to judge between the Lord
Of Nature and his works? to lift thy voice
Againſt the ſovereign order he decreed,

* S. Cyp. de Virgin. (Quoted by Liguori.) Ibid.

All good and lovely? to blaſpheme the bands
Of tenderneſs innate and ſocial love,
Holieſt of things! by which the general orb
Of being as by adamantine links,
Was drawn to perfect union and ſuſtain'd
From everlaſting?"*

Not content, however, with fulſome adulations of the celibate ſtate, ſome writers, to beget in the minds of their ſimple readers a deſire for ſuch a life, repreſent the marriage union as an evil to be carefully avoided, and as almoſt certain to produce diſaſtrous conſequences both in time and eternity. St. Ambroſe ſays, that "whoever preſerves the virtue of celibacy is an angel; but whoever violates it is a *demon!*" † "For a married woman to become a ſaint," obſerves Liguori, "it is neceſſary that ſhe be perfectly free from the *control* and *tyranny* of human ties!" ‡ He then paints in vivid colours the conſequences of wedlock; condemns as hindrances to communion with Deity the holy and indiſpenſable obligations of the wife and mother; and even condeſcends to indelicate particulars, ſuch as the pains and perils of parturition. "Oh! how un-

* The Pleaſures of Imagination, book ii.

† Lit. de Offic. (Quoted by Liguori.) *Vide* The True Spouſe of Chriſt, chap. i. ‡ Ibid.

happy and miſerable," he continues, "is the life of the generality of married perſons! I have known the circumſtances, the feelings, and diſpoſitions of numberleſs married perſons, from the higheſt to the loweſt claſs of ſociety; and how few of them were content! The bad treatment of huſbands, the diſaffection of children, the wants of the family, the control of relatives, the pains of child-birth, which are always accompanied with danger of death, etc., plunge poor ſeculars into endleſs troubles and agitation, and fill their ſouls with continual *regret for not having been called to a happier and holier ſtate.* God grant that, in the midſt of ſuch troubles and agitation, many of them may not loſe their immortal ſouls, and that along with paſſing through *a hell in this life*, they may not be condemned to an eternity of torments in the next. Such is the condition of many of thoſe who have engaged in the married ſtate."* Surely ſuch flagitious ſentiments are deſerving of virtuous execration; being libels upon the pureſt and moſt exalted of conditions, and oppoſed to the beſt intereſts and nobleſt inſtincts of humanity.

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* Ibid.

There is, I conceive, no truth more ſelf-evident, no propoſition more axiomatic, than that monaſticiſm has a ſpecial tendency to vitiate and debaſe the intellectual powers, and extinguiſh the holieſt and tendereſt emotions of the heart. As with the body ſo with the mind. If the one be deprived of liberty, pure air, exerciſe, and proper nutriment, it will gradually droop and wither. If the other fails to exert its faculties, or if thoſe faculties become diverted from their legitimate channel, premature decay is likewiſe inevitable. Now I know of nothing more calculated to oppreſs and cruſh the mind, to demoraliſe and ſeriouſly injure its delicate organization, than the ſyſtem of which I ſpeak. Monaſticiſm ſtrives to reform what Nature has formed; to perfect what Nature has left imperfect; and in order that men may eſcape judicial ſuffering in eternity, it impoſes a voluntary ſuffering in time. After all, it is but a ſelfiſh ſyſtem, baſed upon a mere arithmetical queſtion of profit and loſs. For its own benefit it would ſtrike a bargain with God!

Man is a dual formation of body and mind, while each faculty has duties peculiarly appertaining to itſelf. He certainly was not deſigned

to fly, for he has legs to walk; nor can he ſafely ſupply the cravings of one nature to the neglect of thoſe of the other. The mind cannot always remain on the ſtretch. Indeed, the attempt to keep it ſo would be moſt hazardous. If the bow be not occaſionally unſtrung it will be ſure not to ſhoot well. Monaſticiſm, by almoſt entirely aboliſhing, or at leaſt greatly reſtricting, the uſe of rational enjoyment, and by keeping the mind ſcrewed up to an unneceſſary and unnatural point of tenſion, produces untold moral evils. A diſruption muſt neceſſarily enſue. And although the fatal and inevitable effects of ſuch reſtraint attract little attention, and ſtill leſs obſervation; although no ſecular eye dares penetrate the thick walls which ſhut out the world, and therefore cannot take cogniſance of paſſing events within; nevertheleſs, the evil is not the leſs real or appalling, and ſhould not the leſs be diſcountenanced and diſcouraged by every one who poſſeſſes an ordinary ſhare of ſympathy for the ſufferings and ſorrows of his fellow-man,—already, Heaven knows! numerous enough without their being increaſed by artificial means.

Few but thoſe who are practically ac-

quainted with the ſyſtem of monachiſm can form anything like a correct idea of the extent to which its rigid requirements are carried out. The refinement of its tortures has no parallel. Free interchange of thought and feeling is prohibited. Family and friends muſt be renounced. Every written communication has firſt of all to be ſubmitted to the *eſpionage* of the ſuperior. The leaſt ſenſual indulgence, ſuch as laughter, is proſcribed and denounced as ſinful. The religious muſt have no will, no want, no deſire. They are reſtricted in talking, walking, ſitting, ſtanding, ſleeping, eating, ſeeing, hearing, ſmelling, and feeling.* Theſe poor ſolitaries

* Modeſty requires that after ſpeaking as much as will be neceſſary for the ends of the recreation, you ſhow a ſtronger inclination to liſten than to ſpeak. Speak always in a low tone . . . Your walk muſt be grave; neither too quick, nor too ſlow . . . . A religious muſt practiſe modeſty in ſitting . . . . She muſt avoid every ſlothful poſture, and muſt abſtain from croſſing the feet, and from putting one leg on the other . . . . She muſt at meals take her food without avidity . . . A religious in general ſhould keep the eyes caſt down . . . . To mortify the ſmell you muſt abſtain from the uſe of perfumes, and ſcented waters . . . . The ſenſe of touch muſt be kept under the greateſt reſtraint by external mortifications, ſuch as faſts, hair-cloths, diſciplines and watchings."—*Liguori's True Spouſe of Chriſt*, chap. viii. ſecs. I—III.

cannot, when in the garden, even freely pluck fruit, or inhale the fragrance of flowers. Nature may indeed ſmile, but not for them.

In Tilliard's *Memoire*, there occurs this note of Siſter Mary Lemonnier:—"My confeſſor," ſhe obſerves, "forbad me to gather flowers and to draw. Unfortunately, walking in the garden with the nuns, there were on the edge of the graſs two wild poppies, which, without any intention, I lopped between my fingers in paſſing. One of the ſiſters ſaw me, and ran to inform the ſuperioreſs who was in front, and who directly came towards me, made me open my hand; and, ſeeing the poppies, told me that I had done for myſelf. And the confeſſor having come the ſame evening, ſhe accuſed me before him of diſobedience in having gathered flowers. It was in vain that I told him that it was done unintentionally, and that they were only wild poppies! I could not obtain permiſſion to confeſs myſelf."

III. Monaſticiſm is pernicious in a *phyſical* ſenſe.

Would that I were enabled to illuſtrate this fact by other than a deſcriptive character—that I could throw open the doors of conventual cells, and array before the reader's

view their dejected and miſerable occupants. How the blanched, melancholy, and care-worn viſage, would affect and call forth the tendereſt feelings of commiſeration for the unhappy victims of a ſuperſtition, which demands the twofold ſacrifice of mind and body upon its unhallowed altars! *Here* would be obſerved the young man, whoſe health is gradually and imperceptibly declining,—evidently the ſubject of conſuming grief,—who, were he but in poſſeſſion of rational notions of religion, would, probably, be both an ornament and a bleſſing to that ſociety which he now practically diſavows. And *there* would be diſcovered the delicate and tender maiden, who, ere ſcarce two ſummers' ſuns had paſſed, was

> "Like the lily,
> That once was miſtreſs of the field, and flouriſhed,"

whoſe eyes ſparkled with joyous life, and upon whoſe countenance health of body and ſerenity of mind were depicted; now, alas! become the prey of the fell deſtroyer. No longer do the tinted cheek or the clear, calm eye betoken a ſoul at peace, or a favourable condition of the phyſical powers. Theſe are changed now. Nothing now preſents itſelf

but the wan and dejected countenance—ſad but ſure omens of extreme mental and bodily proſtration. And although there might be diſcerned in ſome an apparent cheerfulneſs of manner, it is but an affectation of the reality—the poor, hollow, miſerable counterfeit of genuine contentment. For I have not the ſlighteſt heſitation in affirming, that the deluded inmates of the cloiſter are poſitively under ſtrict obligation to conceal, even from each other, the real emotions of their hearts—thus being driven to a make-believe that they poſſeſs ſpiritual joy and peace, by the forced aſſumption of a demeanour anything but in keeping with the wretchedneſs of their true condition; which literally verifies the words of the dramatiſt:*—

> "Le plus ſouvent l'apparence deçoit;
> Il ne faut pas toujours juger ſur ce qu'on voit."

If the monaſtic life be really a ſtate calculated to afford happineſs to thoſe who embrace it, then I muſt have had ample opportunities for obſerving its ſalutary influences. The fact is otherwiſe. And hence monaſtics are placed under decided obligation to *aſſume* a

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* Molière—Madame *Pernelle* in *Tartuffe*.

demeanour, which any one who has had the ſlighteſt experience well knows is not conſiſtent with the ſpontaneous emotions of the mind.*

In drawing this picture, it was not at all neceſſary to heighten it by too lively a colouring. If there exiſts any fault, it lies in the tints not being ſufficiently vivid; for none but thoſe who have been behind the ſcenes can tell what weight of woe thoſe experience who are immured in convent priſons.

> "What ages of what agonies may low'r
> O'er one bruiſed human heart, in one brief hour,"

are peculiarly their lot to feel with all the intenſity that remorſe can give. We have an inſtance in the writings of Caſſian, where he deſcribes, from perſonal experience, the "*aſcedia*," or liſtleſſneſs of mind and body, to which ſuch perſons were expoſed when they ſighed to find themſelves alone. I have myſelf known a perſon of conſiderable ſtanding in the monaſtery, who, during the few days preceding the renewal of his vows,

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* St. Jane Chantal uſed to ſay, "When I am among our young religious I laugh in order to encourage them to enjoy the recreation, for this is neceſſary."—*Liguori's True Spouſe of Chriſt.*

exclaimed in preſence of his brethren,—"O how ſweet is *liberty!*" I greatly fear that many who are bound to their ſolitary cloiſters give, but in vain, ſimilar ejaculations, and pine beneath the blighting influences of corroding grief:—

> "'Tis better to be lowly born,
> And range with humble livers in content,
> Than to be perk'd up in a gliſtering grief,
> And wear a golden ſorrow."

Deſtruction of the body is one of the principles upon which monaſticiſm is baſed. "If you deſire to live in this houſe," ſaid St. Bernard the abbot, to thoſe who preſented themſelves for admiſſion at the monaſtery of Clairvaux, "you muſt *leave your body*. Only *ſpirits* enter here!" The entire ſyſtem tends to ſelf-abnegation, ſelf-renunciation, ſelf-immolation. Its trifling, inſipid ceremonies; its haraſſing and inceſſant occupations; its idle and empty routine of monotonous duties—all tend to excite the mind and produce depreſſing paſſions. Theſe again rëact upon the phyſical conſtitution, and engender diſeaſes of a ſerious type. "Nothing," obſerves a celebrated writer,* "is more clearly ſettled

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* Mr. Draper.

by experience, than that grief acts as a ſlow poiſon, not only in the immediate infliction of pain, but in gradually impairing the powers of life, and in ſubtracting from the ſum of our days. I am confident that the far greater portion of human ſuffering is of our own procuring—the reſult of ignorance and miſtaken views." Another eminent writer,* treating of this ſubject, remarks :—" No one can imagine what a vaſt number of diſeaſes, not only functional, but organic, ariſe ſimply from unpleaſant paſſions of the mind." And Luther, deſcribing the melancholy and dejection to which he when a monk was ſubjected, obſerves: " Solitude and melancholy are poiſon. They are deadly to all; but above all to the young."

In confirmation of the moral and phyſical evils conſequent upon monaſticiſm, I ſhall ſubmit a few confeſſions from the lips of thoſe who could individually ſay,—" *Quorum pars magna fui.*" In the Letters of Madame de Chantal, curtailed and interpolated though the prieſts have rendered them, yet we diſcover therein quite ſufficient to convey clearly the genuine ſentiments of her heart.

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* Dr. John Elliotſon, F.R.S., etc.

She writes: "All that I have ſuffered during the whole courſe of my life is not to be compared to the torments I now feel. I am reduced to ſuch a degree that nothing can ſatisfy me or give me any relief except one word—*Death!*" Even Alban Butler admits, "that exterior trials, (alluding to the death of near relations) however ſevere, were light in compariſon of the interior anguiſh, darkneſs, and ſpiritual dryneſs, which ſhe ſometimes experienced for a conſiderable time." Poor woman! I grow ſad when I think of her. Before ſhe became an abbeſs ſhe addreſſed a letter (now extant) to her director Francis de Sales, in which ſhe obſerves: "There is ſomething within me that has never been ſatisfied." This woman had within her heart depths of unknown paſſion. But huſh! I dare not go further. There is enough methinks in her hiſtory to make even a dead man weep!—

> "Oh that my heart was quiet as a grave,
> Aſleep in moonlight!
> For as a torrid ſunſet boils with gold
> Up to the zenith, fierce within my ſoul
> A paſſion burns from baſement to the cope."

I ſhall next allude to the monk, Bernard, whoſe mortification of his ſenſes was ſuch

that when twelve months in the novitiate he did not know whether the top of his cell was covered with a ceiling, nor whether the church had more than one window, though it had three. "His face," ſays his biographer, "was emaciated and exceeding pale and wan, and his whole body bore viſible marks of his auſtere and penitential life. . . . . He almoſt always laboured under ſome corporeal infirmity, and his ſtomach, through a habit of exceſſive faſting, was ſcarce ever able to bear any ſolid food. . . . . He often made a ſcruple of taking herb pottage in which a little oil and honey were mixed. When one expreſſed his ſurpriſe at his making ſuch a difficulty, he anſwered: 'Did you know how great the obligation of a monk is, you would not eat one morſel of bread without having firſt watered it with your tears.' He uſed to ſay, 'Our fathers built their monaſteries in damp unwholeſome places, that the monks might have the uncertainty of life more ſenſibly before their eyes.' St. Bernard ſeemed to ſet no bounds to the auſterities which he practiſed. William of St. Thierry ſays, that he went to his meals as to a torment, and that the ſight of food ſeemed often his whole refection. His

watchings were incredible. He ſeemed by his mortifications to have brought upon himſelf a dangerous diſtemper, and his life was almoſt deſpaired of."* A good monk, truly! "the prodigy and wonder of the eleventh age!"† Surely, ſuch an one muſt have been very *happy* indeed—happy in his ſolitude, and in the ſcrupulouſly exact fulfilment of his rules and vows. But *was* he happy? Let us hear what he himſelf ſays on this important ſubject. And oh! that all young people now being beguiled by intereſted partizans, who paint in glowing colours to their fervid imaginations and confiding hearts, the fugitive happineſs of the cloiſter, would but ponder on the melancholy confeſſion, and profit by the experience, of a ſainted monaſtic. Bernard writes:—"I am ſeized all over with horror, dread, and trembling, whenever I repeat within myſelf that ſentence, 'Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred.'"‡ And again, addreſſing ſome of his brethren, he obſerves: "My monſtrous life and my afflicted con-

* Lives of the Saints, vol. viii. (S. Bernard, A.)

† Ibid.

‡ Serm. xxviii. in Cant. Totus inhorrui, etc.

ſcience cry towards you for compaſſion; for I am a kind of amphibious creature, that neither lives as an eccleſiaſtic nor as a recluſe. When you have learned my danger favour me with your advice and prayers."*

I ſhall not ſtop here to diſcuſs the very heinous offence of which Bernard was guilty, by injuring his health in the way that Alban Butler teſtifies. Life being the property of God, and man having only a right uſe of it, we may fairly conclude that it is ſuicidal to do aught that is abſolutely unlawful either to injure or deſtroy the divine right of property in it—a moral doctrine even acknowledged by Socrates, juſt before he imbibed the fatal cup.†

Luther, in deſcribing his perſonal experience as a monk and the reſults of his long and cloſe obſervation, obſerves:—"What I here ſay I have learned by my own expe-

* Epiſt. 250.

† Man ſeems to be one of thoſe beings in which the gods have reſerved to themſelves a proprietary, and therefore, as a maſter would be angry with his ſlave if he ſhould injure his life without his leave, and would puniſh him for ſo doing, ſo it is reaſonable to think that no man ought to do aught prejudicial to his exiſtence, unleſs God lays him under a neceſſity of killing himſelf, as he now does me.—*Plat. in Phæd.* p. 62. Ed. Serrani.

rience, and that of others, in the monaſtery. I have ſeen many who, with the utmoſt diligence and ſcrupuloſity, have omitted nothing which might pacify conſcience; have worn haircloth, faſted, prayed, afflicted, and exhauſted their bodies by various ſeverities; ſo that, even if they had been made of iron, they muſt at length have been deſtroyed. Yet the more they laboured, the more fearful they became. And eſpecially as the hour of death drew nigh, they were ſo full of trepidation, that I have ſeen many murderers condemned for their crimes meet death with more confidence than theſe perſons who had lived ſo ſtrictly."* And in an epiſtle to George, Duke of Saxony, Luther ſays:—"Truly I was a pious monk, and followed the rules of my order more ſtrictly than I can tell. If ever monk had got to heaven by monkery, I had been that monk. In this all the monks of my acquaintance will bear me witneſs. Had the thing continued much longer I had become a martyr unto death, through vigils, prayer, reading, and other labours."†

Luther's account of himſelf is fully borne

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* Comment. on Galatians. † Luth. Op. w. xix.

out by the hiſtorian, D'Aubigné, who ſtates, "that the young monk ſtudied ſo cloſely and ardently that he often omitted to ſay his office during two or three weeks. Then becoming alarmed at the thought of having tranſgreſſed the rules of his order, he ſhut himſelf up to make amends for his negligence, and commenced conſcientiouſly repeating all the omitted hours, without thinking of meat or drink. On one occaſion his ſleep went from him for ſeven weeks."*

Sir Bulwer Lytton, alluding to the unfortunate wife of Henry IV., (Mary de Medicis) who ſought peace for her tortured ſpirit in the tranquillity of the cloiſter, thus pathetically obſerves :—"Alas, the cell and the convent are but a vain emblem of that deſire to fly to God which belongs to diſtreſs; the ſolitude ſoothes, but the monotony recalls regret. And for my own part I never ſaw, in my frequent tours through catholic countries, the ſtill walls in which monaſtic vanity hoped to ſhut out the world, but a melancholy came over me. What hearts at war with themſelves!—what unceaſing regrets!—what pining after the paſt!—what long and beau-

* Hiſt. Reform. book ii. ch. 3, vol. i.

tiful years devoted to a moral grave, by a momentary raſhneſs, an impulſe, a *diſappointment!*"*

Michelet alſo gives a very affecting picture of the phyſical evils reſulting from monaſticiſm. He writes:—"Fifteen years ago, I occupied in a very ſolitary part of the town, a houſe, the garden of which was adjacent to that of a convent of women. Though my windows overlooked the greateſt part of their garden, I had never ſeen my ſad neighbours. In the month of May, on Rogation day, I heard numerous weak, very weak voices chanting prayers, as the proceſſion paſſed through the convent-garden. The ſinging was ſad, dry, unpleaſant; their voices falſe, as if ſpoiled by ſufferings! I thought for a moment they were chanting prayers for the dead! but liſtening more attentively I diſtinguiſhed, on the contrary, '*Te rogamus audi nos!*'—the ſong of hope which invokes the benediction of the God of life upon fruitful nature! This May-ſong, chanted by theſe *lifeleſs* nuns, offered to me a bitter contraſt. To ſee theſe pale girls crawling along on the flowery, verdant turf—theſe poor girls, who

* Pilgrims of the Rhine.

will never bloom again! The thought of the middle ages, that had at firſt flaſhed acroſs my mind, ſoon died away; for then monaſtic life was connected with a thouſand other things; but in our modern harmony what is this but a barbarous contradiction—a falſe, harſh, grating note. What I then beheld before me was to be defended neither by nature nor by hiſtory. I ſhut my window again, and ſadly reſumed my books. This ſight had been painful to me, as it was not ſoftened or atoned for by any poetical ſentiment. It reminded me much leſs of chaſtity than of ſterile widowhood—a ſtate of emptineſs, inaction, diſguſt—of an intellectual and moral faſt—the ſtate in which theſe unfortunate creatures are kept by their abſolute rulers!"*

It is a ſtriking but melancholy fact that noviciates, or convents where young perſons are trained, perfectly reſemble hoſpitals. Moſt of the poſtulants become ill after a very ſhort time; and I am only ſurpriſed that many more deaths do not occur in theſe peſtilent places. Gerald Griffin, whoſe writings are becoming popular in this country, died

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* Prieſts, Women, and Families.

within the first or second year of his probatory course. Since his decease a tragedy of his, entitled *Gisippus*,* has been acted at Drury Lane Theatre, amidst the most unbounded ovations—Mr. Macready having sustained the principal character. Poor Griffin! like so many others, his fame came too late. Whilst residing in London, all the interest that himself and his friend Banim could command was insufficient to get his dramatic productions brought upon the stage. His remains lie interred in the cemetery of the convent at Cork, belonging to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Poor fellow! sick of life, weary through "hope deferred," and bleeding from disappointed love and ambition, he almost yielded to despair, and as a *dernier resort*, sought the cloister as the only, but ineffectual anodyne for his soul's terrible unrest. Dr. Griffin does not hold the "Brothers" altogether free from blame in the matter of his death.† I frequently recall to mind, though with a painful melancholy of feeling, those poems of Griffin's, wherein he too truly expresses dark forebodings of his untimely

* A Play in Five Acts. London: 1842.

† *Vide* Life of Gerald Griffin, Esq., by his Brother.

fate.* The language of the monologue which the author puts into the mouth of *Giſippus*, when—endeavouring to elude his purſuers—he enters a burying-ground and leans over a tomb, has been literally fulfilled in himſelf:—

> "Will the dead
> Afford me what the living have denied,
> Reſt for my weary limbs, and ſhelter? Here
> At leaſt I ſhall find quiet, if not eaſe,
> And hoſt who do not grudge their entertaining
> Even though the gueſt be miſery. Colder hearts
> Than thoſe which reſt within this ſepulchre,
> I've left in all the health of luſty life,
> Informing boſoms harder than its marble,
> Then I will be your gueſt, ye ſilent dead,
> *Would I could ſay, your fellow-ſlumberer!*"†

Many brilliant and promiſing young perſons, of both ſexes, are thus yearly ſacrificed on the altar of this modern Moloch, and are ſent to rejoin in heaven thoſe martyrs that have preceded them.

I have myſelf whilſt in the monaſtery ſuſtained conflicts which I cannot deſcribe—mental anguiſh which I ſhudder to contemplate—perturbation of ſoul which baffled

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* *Vide* Poems, "In the days of my boyhood." "I am alone." "Know you not that lovely river," etc.—Griffin's Poetical Works. Ed. *Parlour Library*.

† Act iv. Scene iii.

every remedy I thought calculated to pacify it. Theſe ſevere trials and this mental proſtration and inward agony were, doubtleſs, the inevitable conſequences of monaſtic rigour, and the continual warfare which this unnatural ſyſtem wages againſt Nature, who will not with impunity ſuffer an infringement of her rights. But my ghoſtly father, to whom I alone dare venture to reveal them, counſelled me to regard my diſtreſs of mind, diſquietude of conſcience, and the extreme diſtaſte which I experienced for the profeſſion of a monk, as the wiles of the enemy to enſnare my ſoul and entice me into the world, where my ſalvation would be jeopardiſed, and my anticipation of a bliſsful futurity rendered perhaps abortive. Accordingly, he had recourſe to an opiate in order to adminiſter relief to my burdened ſpirit. But it failed to be efficacious. This was by placing me under obligation to read privately, in an audible voice, the life of St. Anthony of the deſert—one of the greateſt fanatics the world ever produced—ſeveral times a day for weeks together, until all the ſingular exploits of the hermit, and his repeated phyſical combats with nefarious ſpirits, had become ſo impreſſed upon my memory, that

I could repeat by rote the life of this ſaintly devotee with the ſame facility that I could the pages of the Breviary. However, what prieſts and their quack noſtrums could not effect for me, I, after ſome vigorous efforts, effected for myſelf. The Jeſuits may eaſily corrupt and diſquiet conſciences; they cannot purify nor tranquilliſe them. Never ſhall I forget the anguiſh of ſoul I endured when one day I proſtrated myſelf before an image of the Madonna, (whoſe looks beamed with light and love, after the exquiſite touches of Salvator Roſa,) exclaiming, "*O Mary! I never will deſert you!*" Doubt and fear reigned ſucceſſively over my troubled ſpirit, and bowed me to the earth. I felt as did the aged captive of whom we read, who, having been confined for many years in a dungeon of the Baſtile, when the glorious tidings of deliverance was announced in his ears, implored as the greateſt of bleſſings, that he might be permitted to paſs the remainder of his life in captivity. Accuſtomed to gloomineſs and ſlavery he envied not the children of liberty and light. He could not gaze with joyfulneſs upon the brilliancy of day, the greateſt part of whoſe exiſtence was dreamed away amid the blackneſs and darkneſs of a

protracted night. So, when the light of reason burst upon my mind I dreaded its power. I would have preferred remaining in darkness rather than suffer the agonies of doubt and disquietude which the sun-beams of Truth occasioned. But Truth was stronger than I; and having overcome in the contest with error, I now bear the palm of victory, and thank Heaven for the ordeal through which I was enabled to pass. As Archdeacon Hare admirably remarks: — "The light must enter into the darkness, ere the darkness can know that it is without light, and open its heart to desire and embrace it."*

IV. Monasticism is pernicious in a *political* point of view.

The interests of the State are materially and permanently injured by the abstraction of the services and properties of those who enter the cloister. Such persons are lost to the country as citizens, and pass at once from the control of the law and the protection of the constitution. It is a fatal and mischievous error to suppose that individuals have the moral right to direct their own actions in the

* Guesses at Truth.

matter of retiring from the world. Such an idea is the reſult of great ignorance; and when the deſire of ſerving God better is the ground alleged, to ignorance becomes added ſuperſtition.

The number of monaſtic inſtitutions in England and Wales are conſiderably on the increaſe, as will appear from the following authentic ſtatement: In 1847, there were thirty-four convents and eight monaſteries. In 1848, there were thirty-eight convents and eleven monaſteries. In 1851, the convents for women alone had increaſed to fifty-three. In 1852, they numbered ſixty-two; and in 1853, they were further augmented to ſeventy-five; being an addition of twenty-two in two years. Well, we cannot be far wrong if we allow five more for the paſt year,—in all eighty. Aſſuming that each convent or monaſtery contains twenty inmates*—not by any means a high average—it would yield a total of one thouſand ſix hundred nuns, independently of monaſtics of the other ſex. Now, eſtimating that each

* Mr. T. Chambers eſtimates the number at thirty. *Vide* Hanſard's Par. Debates, 10th of May, 1853.—*Inſpection of Nunneries.*

of these women brought into the convent in the shape of dowry, say, £450—many bring ten times this amount—it would yield a capital of £720,000; and not a dead or inactive capital either; for as quickly as a religious dies out, her property becomes immediately available; so that instead of the longevity of a nun being a boon, her premature death becomes the source of pecuniary profit. Should such establishments go on increasing in the same ratio as they have during the past few years, the immense amount of capital that would accumulate therein must be highly detrimental to the state. According to Hume, the Roman court once drew a revenue from this country greater than the entire national revenue of the crown of England. If monastic establishments are quietly suffered to progress *ad libitum*, although the papal court may not derive proximate advantages therefrom, certainly this country must suffer in a monetary and commercial point of view, from the enormous amount of wealth that is sure to become accumulated in such places.

It is a very serious question, whether the state is justified in permitting the increase of convents in a free country like England; or

whether permitting them, it ſhould not exerciſe a ſuitable vigilance and control over their inmates. Much oppoſition was raiſed both in and out of the Houſe of Commons when Mr. Chambers brought in his motion for the Inſpection of Nunneries; as if the meaſure was dictated by anti-catholic feeling and religious aſperity—motives which that gentleman very properly diſavowed. But Roman catholic countries, ſtrange to ſay, have taken the initiative in this matter, and have found it neceſſary not only to hold a ſtrict ſuperviſion over, but poſitively to limit, and occaſionally to ſuppreſs, ſuch inſtitutes as being inimical to the ſafety and welfare of the various ſtates in which they were planted. The reformed Leopold, who ſucceeded the laſt of the Medici, made a law,* ſuppreſſing ſome religious houſes, and materially reſtricting others; which law likewiſe provided for their due inſpection. It was ſaid of Leopold that he found Tuſcany a wilderneſs and left it a paradiſe. At all events he was a wiſe and good emperor and ſtateſman; and his public acts are well worthy of conſideration if not commendation.

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* A. D. 1780.

In Ruſſia, no convent can receive an inmate without previouſly addreſſing the Synod at Moſcow, and forwarding an affidavit of the novice, that the life ſhe wiſhes to adopt is of her own free choice. In Pruſſia, no girl can take the veil without firſt undergoing an examination by the civil authorities. In Bavaria, nuns are not allowed to make other than triennial vows; and a periodical viſitation of all convents is ſtrictly enforced. In Auſtria, monaſtics have the privilege privately to addreſs the civil government, and at any time they may deem expedient. Whilſt in many French convents vows are only ſuffered to be taken temporarily, and the maire of the arrondiſſement and the authorities have power to make a viſitation of them, without even giving any notice of their intention. In Sardinia, ſome few months ago, a bill for the Suppreſſion of Convents was brought into the Piedmonteſe Chamber.* On that occaſion, in concluding his ſpeech Mr. Brofferio ſaid:—"The miniſter tells us there are in Sardinia four hundred religious houſes. He wiſhes to ſuppreſs, we

* At the very time we write, the ſubject is again being diſcuſſed.

will ſay, two hundred. I will vote for this ſuppreſſion. If but fifty, I will vote for ſuppreſſing the fifty. If but ten, I will ſay ten. If he will only get rid of a ſingle monk, I will ſay, away goes the monk! I will content myſelf with that; but I will wait, having faith in the future, and being perſuaded that it will bring us better times and better men."

Several years ago the Abbé De La Mennais publiſhed a work* in Paris, in which he ſpeaks of the determination of the French government with reſpect to religious vows and monaſtic eſtabliſhments, and animadverts upon the conſtituted authorities for refuſing to legalize the ſame. The ſtate did not prohibit individuals from taking upon themſelves certain religious obligations. Its maxim was: "L'état ne s'en mêlera pas: ce ſont là des choſes d'un ordre plus élevé qui ſe paſſeront entre la conſcience et Dieu." However, it was conſidered an act of wiſe political policy to put a very conſiderable reſtraint on conventual inſtitutions.

Now, with theſe facts ſtaring us in the face, why ſhould it be conſidered derogatory

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* De la Religion, conſidérée dans ſes rapports avec l'ordre Politique et Civile.

to the dignity of England, or an infringement on the liberty which we enjoy under the broad ægis of her free conſtitution, for religious houſes to be amenable to the laws and open to inſpection? I can ſee no reaſon why our own Government ſhould entirely overlook the ſafety, happineſs, and welfare of thoſe perſons immured in convents. Indeed, ſo far from ſuch inſpection reſulting in evil, it muſt needs be productive of good. If it effected no further benefit than to remove the prejudices and unfavourable impreſſions which obtain in ſome quarters, reſpecting the government of nunneries, this alone, one would think, would be "a conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed." We know how very eaſy it is to deſpoil a virgin of her fair fame; and how buſy the tongue of calumny oftentimes is; never more ſo than when the ſubject of convents comes upon the *tapis*. Now, if theſe places of ſecluſion were open to inſpection, it would really ſerve to diſabuſe the public mind of certain, perhaps prejudicial and unfounded, notions of the doings and workings therein,—that is, if they are as blameleſs and ſpotleſs as they would have the world imagine. Some tranſactions, however, have recently come to light, which

rather detract from than enhance the character of ſuch communities; but motives of delicacy and reſpect for eminent families, will not allow me to revive painful and public diſcloſures.

It is a melancholy fact, however, that many young perſons are cunningly inveigled into convents, (as nuns now inherit they become objects to be gained,) and are afterwards cruelly confined in theſe priſons by *compulſion*. Yet they dare not complain, for this would only ſerve to enhance their miſery, and render their exiſtence, already melancholy enough, one dark ſcene of uninterrupted gloom. Certain prelates in letters to the *Times* may quote the Council of Trent in proof of perſons being anathematiſed who force young men and women into monaſteries againſt their will. It is all perfectly true. But it leaves parents and guardians free to force or compel that conſent, which otherwiſe would be withholden. Were this conſent not neceſſary, there would be no need for the employment of violence to extort it. As it is, however, the *conſent* and *content* of theſe poor creatures very much reſemble the lamb led into catholic churches on St. Agnes' day, extended on its richly-fringed cuſhion,

its ear and tail bedecked with gaudy ribands, bleating to the tones of church muſic, and evidently diſſatisfied with the petting it receives, ſeeming to the ear of the ſatiriſt to cry all the while :—

> "Alack! and alas
> What's all this white damaſk to daiſies and graſs?"

Liguori, ſo far from denying the fact of perſons being *forced* into theſe dens of ſeclusion, devotes one portion of a voluminous book to the inſtruction of ſuch malcontents.* As to ſympathy for ſuch, he poſſeſſes and he profeſſes none. He obſerves: "For my part, I cannot pity you more than I could pity a perſon who had been tranſported (even againſt his will) from a place infected with peſtilence and ſurrounded by enemies, to a healthful country, to be placed there for life ſecure againſt every foe."† He further remarks, to the diſcontented: "Now that you are profeſſed in a convent, and that it is *impoſſible for you to leave it*, tell me what do you wiſh to do? If you have entered religion

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* "*What ought a perſon to do who finds that ſhe has become a nun againſt her inclinations?*"—True Spouſe of Chriſt, ch. xxiv. 8.

† Ibid. 8. ſec. 3.

againſt your inclinations, you muſt now remain with cheerfulneſs. If you abandon yourſelf to melancholy you ſhall lead a life of miſery, and will expoſe yourſelf to great danger of ſuffering a *hell here* and another hereafter. You *muſt then make a virtue of neceſſity*. . . . . Being aſked his opinion regarding a perſon who had become a nun againſt her will, St. Francis de Sales anſwered: 'It is true that this *child*, if ſhe had not been *obliged* by her *parents*, would not have left the world; but this is of little importance, provided ſhe knows that the *force* employed by her parents is more uſeful to her than the permiſſion to follow her own will.'"* What need we of any further witneſs?

After all how falſe and fatal is that ſympathy which ſays, "Leave convents alone, and leave people alone, to do juſt as they like—why heed or intermeddle we?" But ſurely principle ſhould ever take precedence of private feeling. The public good muſt not be ſacrificed either for the ſake of perſonal benefit or gratification. To do ſo would be contrary to the univerſally recogniſed laws

* True Spouſe of Chriſt, 8. § 4.

of ſound polity and ſocial morality. To my mind there cannot be a more contemptible, loathſome, horrifying ſight, than to ſee numbers of young men and women fly ſociety and ſhut themſelves up within the barren walls of a monaſtery, of which the language of Byron, in his Lament of Taſſo, is but too accurately deſcriptive :—

> " Here laughter is not mirth, nor thought the mind—
> Nor ſpeech a language ; nor e'en men mankind ! "

—there to have every noble faculty rot in putrid iſolation, and every phyſical grace turn to emaſculated deformity. As well, and with equal propriety, may the moſt monſtrous ſuperſtitions be imported and ſupported in our land, and ſuicide no longer rank as a crime on the Statute Book ! I thought that the boaſted Freedom of this country had at leaſt one limitation—that no individual was *free* to be a *ſlave*.

FINIS.

Pat

CHISWICK PRESS:—PRINTED BY C. WHITTINGHAM,
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